



As Congress Convened;

Boehner Faces Dissent

House Speaker John Boehner speaks during a news conference in Washington. Boehner is all but assured of re-election to the top House leadership post when his colleagues vote Tuesday. (Jabin Botsford/The New York Times)

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Two Americans charged in foiled coup in Gambia

RICK GLADSTONE
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A botched coup attempt in the tiny West African nation of Gambia last week reached into the American heartland on Monday with criminal charges against two U.S. citizens, accused in federal court of helping to finance, lead and arm the plotters.

The Justice Department said in Washington that the American defendants, both of Gambian descent, were in federal custody. They have been charged with conspiring to violate the Neutrality Act, a seldom-invoked law that prohibits Americans from fighting against a nation at peace with the United States.

The defendants were identified as Cherno Njie, 57, of Austin, Texas, and Papa Faal, 46, of Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

It was not immediately clear to the Associated Press whether they had lawyers or whether other Americans were also under investigation in the case.

Njie was described in the Justice Department's criminal complaint as a businessman who financed the plot, involving 10 to 12 participants, and who intended to serve as the interim leader of Gambia if the coup attempt had succeeded.

Faal was described as a dual citizen who had not been in Gambia for 23 years and claimed to have served in both the U.S. Air Force and the Army.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said in a statement that the defendants had conspired to violate the Neutrality Act by "making an expedition against a friendly nation from the United States and conspiring to possess firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence."

Gambia's president, Yahya Jammeh, an authoritarian leader who took power in a coup 20 years ago, was abroad on Dec. 30 when the attempt to violently unseat him began. □

Boehner faces dissent as Congress convenes

ASHLEY PARKER
© 2015 New York Times

WASHINGTON - Speaker John A. Boehner is all but assured of re-election to the top House leadership post when his colleagues vote Tuesday, but the new term also could serve up the embarrassment of a potentially record number of his own Republican members voting against him as speaker.

How the vote plays out is both a referendum on Boehner's strength and on the Republicans' ability to demonstrate a capacity to govern effectively now that they control both chambers of Congress. Already, the dissension among a small but vocal group of Republicans puts Boehner and his leadership team in the awkward situation of trying to beat back a conservative protest on the opening day of the 114th Congress, detracting from what should be a triumphant Republican return to power.

House Republicans are also dealing with fallout from disclosures that Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the third-ranking House leader, had spoken to a gathering of white supremacists in 2002. Republican leadership has stuck by Scalise, but Democrats have been hammering him and his party, which is still trying to make inroads with minority voters in advance of the 2016 presidential election.

They also have had to deal with the resignation of Rep. Michael G. Grimm, R-N.Y., who pleaded guilty to felony tax evasion.

Democrats clearly were not willing to drop the issue surrounding Scalise. Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary, said Monday that "there is no arguing that who Republicans decide to elevate into a leadership position says a lot about what the conference's priorities and values are."

"Ultimately, Mr. Scalise reportedly described himself as David Duke without the baggage," Earnest said. "So it'll be up to Republicans to decide

what that says about their conference."

Tuesday's vote for speaker represents a reach for relevance by some rank-and-file conservative lawmakers, including those making good on campaign promises about standing up to Boehner and the

politically immature," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., a Boehner loyalist. "We ought to be talking about Keystone, we ought to be talking about our Obamacare reforms and fixes, we ought to be talking about trade and our agenda, and instead

did not prevail on the first ballot.

"Rep. Boehner was selected as the House Republican conference's choice for speaker in November, and he expects to be elected by the whole House this week," said Michael Steel, a Boehner spokesman.



House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio arrives for a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. The new Congress convenes Tuesday with Republicans in control of the House and the Senate as a formidable counterpoint to President Barack Obama in his final two years in office. Obama has the power to veto legislation, an action he's only taken twice in six years. Expect plenty more in the next 24 months in showdowns between the Democratic president and the GOP-led Congress.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

culture of Washington. For Boehner, meanwhile, squashing a conservative uprising and winning handily on the first ballot would send a strong signal to House Republicans, as well as conservative outside groups, that he will not be cowed by recalcitrant members of his conference.

But the mere public questioning of Boehner's leadership still offers a sting to the speaker. In 2013, at the beginning of the last Congress, Boehner lost the votes of a dozen members - more defections than any other speaker has suffered in an election in more than two decades.

(In fact, since the 102nd Congress began in 1991, Boehner is one of just three speakers who has lost the support of more than one member.)

"I just think it's disrespectful to the conference and it's

we have to go through this, and it dominates the media for a few days."

Cole added that those opposing Boehner did not have the votes for an alternative speaker, and lack an "endgame."

"Other than going down and creating a scene, what are you going to do?" he said. "And they don't have an answer to that."

House leadership aides and allies of Boehner said Monday they were reasonably confident the vote would go smoothly Tuesday, where he has a cushion of roughly 28 votes before he would be forced into a second ballot, which would represent a humiliation. But they also said Boehner could ultimately lose the support of up to 20 members of his own conference.

Privately, one Boehner associate said it would be "a catastrophe" if he

So far, the speaker appears to be benefiting from the fact that there is no viable candidate to replace him. Only Reps. Louie Gohmert of Texas and Ted Yoho of Florida have offered themselves as alternatives to Boehner, and neither has a chance of actually becoming speaker. At least a handful of conservative lawmakers who did not support Boehner's bid for speaker in 2013 have said they will vote for him this time.

Boehner also is facing dissent from some who have supported him previously.

Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, who voted for Boehner for speaker in 2013, said he would not vote for him again because he has not been strong enough in fighting back against what many Republicans view as President Barack Obama's executive overreach. □



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2 men attempt most difficult climb in world at Yosemite

KRISTIN J. BENDER
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Two men are roughly halfway through what has been called the hardest rock climb in the world: a free climb of a half-mile (0.8-mile) section of exposed granite in California's Yosemite National Park.

Tom Evans, a climber and photographer, has been chronicling Kevin Jorge-son, 30, of California, and Tommy Caldwell, 36, of Colorado, as they scale their way using only their hands and feet.

El Capitan, the largest monolith of granite in the world, rises more than 3,000 feet (914 meters) above the Yosemite Valley floor. The men eat, stretch and sleep in hanging tents suspended to El Capitan's Dawn Wall.

They don't have the creature comforts of home, but they have kept in touch with the outside world thanks to social media --tweeting, posting on Facebook, feeding infor-

mation for blogs and keeping in touch with a bevy of supporters on the ground. "The guys are doing great," said Josh Lowell with Big Up Productions, which has been chronicling their climbs for the last six years. "(Monday) they are rest-

ing and trying to grow skin back on their fingertips so they can continue to do battle with the hardest climbing sections, which involve grabbing tiny, razor-sharp edges of rock," Lowell said.

If all goes as planned, the

duo could be at the top as soon as Friday or Saturday, Lowell said.

"But that's best-case scenario."

It could take several more days just to get through the difficult section where they currently are. If any weath-

er moves in, that could also delay things, but the forecast is looking good for now," he said.

Many have climbed Dawn Wall but the pair would be the first to "free climb" the section using ropes only as a safeguard against falls. The first climber reached El Capitan's summit in 1958, and there are roughly 100 routes up to the top.

Evans said the two have a cellphone on their ascent, but they weren't taking calls Monday because they were resting and "want no distractions while on the cliff."

"The two also weren't answering emails from roughly 1,500 feet (457 meters) above the ground.

These practices may not seem unusual, but the climbers have relied heavily on social media to document their adventure. Both update their Facebook pages regularly and tweet from the Dawn Wall, which has been called "as smooth as alabaster, as steep as the bedroom wall." □



This photo shows the climbing face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Two men, Kevin Jorge-son and Tommy Caldwell, are roughly halfway through climbing El Capitan: a free climb of a half-mile section of exposed granite in California's Yosemite National Park. El Capitan, the largest monolith of granite in the world, rises more than 3,000 feet above the Yosemite Valley floor.

(AP Photo/Ben Margot)

Strong dollar makes world travel cheaper for Americans

DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — If you've been putting off a trip abroad because it's too expensive, start packing your bags.

A stronger dollar has reduced the price of travel, from a hotel room to a glass of beer, in much of Europe, Japan, India and elsewhere.

"This is one of the best times for Americans to travel in years," says Matt Kepnes, author of "How to Travel the World on \$50 a Day" and other travel books.

Other economies are shaky, making their currencies less valuable. Europe is barely growing. Japan is already officially in recession. China's growth has slowed. Meanwhile, the U.S. economy has been chugging along, and the dollar has gained too.

Many economists expect that steady U.S. growth will compel the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates later this year, making dollar investments more attractive and leading traders to sell other currencies and buy dollars.

Let's say that in June you had a charming dinner for two in Paris for 75 euros. First, congratulations. Second, it cost \$103 then; today it would be \$89. Expensive countries may not be cheap, but at least they're more affordable now.

BEST BARGAINS

Thanks to the pound's decline, England is cheaper than it was six months ago. But the euro has slumped more, making most of continental Europe an even better bargain. Travel writer Kepnes says Greece is attractive right now because hotels and tour operators

have been slashing prices to fill rooms. The same thing is happening in Portugal and parts of Spain.

"Be the contrarian traveler," Kepnes says. "If you want to go to Europe, consider eastern or central Europe, where prices are generally cheaper," he says. He recommends going during the "shoulder season" — late spring or early fall — rather than in the peak summer season.

WHEN TO FLY

Demand for travel is so strong that most airlines don't have to cut prices to sell seats.

"The summer fares are still very expensive," says George Hobica, founder of travel website airfare-watchdog.com. But airlines might cut prices this spring if the strong dollar discourages Europeans and Asians from flying to and from the U.S.

THE OPTIONS

Hobica recommends checking foreign airlines. He says Etihad, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines and others sometimes offer better prices to Europe than U.S. carriers do, although they could include a distant stopover. □

STRONG DOLLAR

WHAT IT MEANS

Miami judge weds gays and lesbians after ruling against ban

CURT ANDERSON
TAMARA LUSH

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Lesbian and gay couples were married in Miami on Monday by the same judge who said she saw no reason why they couldn't immediately get their licenses ahead of Florida's coming-out party as the 36th U.S. state where same-sex marriages are legal statewide.

The addition of Florida's 19.9 million people means 70 percent of Americans now live in states where gay marriage is legal.

The courtroom erupted in cheers when Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Sarah Zabel cleared the way for the licenses issued to Cathy Pareto and Karla Arguello, and Jeff and Todd Delmay. Then she presided over their weddings in a dual ceremony.

More than 60 percent of voters approved an amendment to Florida's constitution to ban same-sex marriages in 2008. But judges in Florida, as in many other states, found that such bans violate the U.S. Constitution's guarantees of equal treatment and due process.

Although same-sex marriage is now a reality in Florida, Attorney General Pam Bondi is still pursuing appeals at both the federal and state levels. Her position — one shared by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, now considering a run for

president — is that marriage should be defined by each state.

Bush, who opposed gay marriage while governor, tried to find middle ground

believe marriage is a sacrament and want to safeguard religious liberty."

While the news that same-sex marriages were starting was largely met with

Fussell shut down the courthouse chapel, saying no marriage ceremonies — either gay or straight — would be allowed there. At least two other counties in north-

het.

The legal rulings reflect how much Florida has changed since the days of Anita Bryant, the former beauty pageant queen and orange juice spokeswoman who started her national campaign against gay rights in Miami in the 1970s. The state's first weddings were set to happen in the same county where, 38 years ago, Bryant successfully campaigned to overturn a Dade County ordinance banning discrimination against gays. The county commission reinstated those protections two decades later.

Bryant's career suffered — as did Florida orange juice sales — and she blamed the "ultra-liberal press."

"They're saying I'm a bigot and have hatred for the homosexuals," she told The AP in 1977. The state's Catholic bishops issued a joint statement Monday expressing disappointment, saying implications of gay marriages aren't fully understood and will upend millennia of tradition.

"How society understands marriage has great public significance," they said. "Because of this, redefining civil 'marriage' to include two persons of the same sex will have far-reaching consequences in society. Such a change advances the notion that marriage is only about the affective gratification of consenting adults."




Catherina Pareto, left, and her partner Karla Arguello celebrate on the court house steps after Circuit Court Judge Sarah Zabel lifted a stay on her July ruling that Florida's same sex marriage ban violates equal protections under the U.S. Constitution, Monday, Jan. 5, 2015 in Miami. Judge Zabel provided a jump-start Monday to Florida's entry as the 36th state where gays and lesbians can legally marry, saying she saw no reason why same-sex couples couldn't immediately get their licenses in Miami-Dade County ahead of a midnight launch statewide.

Monday, urging people in a statement to "show respect for the good people on all sides of the gay and lesbian marriage issue - including couples making lifetime commitments to each other who are seeking greater legal protections and those of us who


cheers or even shrugs from Florida's more liberal enclaves such as South Florida and St. Petersburg, signs of opposition to the rulings were evident farther north, where more conservative Floridians live.

In Jacksonville, Duval County Court Clerk Ronnie

east Florida did the same. Liberty Counsel, a conservative legal group based in the Orlando area, planned to file complaints in several counties Monday in an effort to block clerks from issuing licenses to same-sex couples, said the group's lawyer, Horatio "Harry" Mi-



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Jury selection starts in Boston bombing trial

DENISE LAVOIE

AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Potential jurors stared intently at Boston Marathon bombing defendant Dzhokhar Tsarnaev as jury selection began under tight security Monday in one the America's most closely watched terror trials in recent years.

Tsarnaev, flanked by his attorneys, sat at a table at the front of the jury assembly room. Wearing a dark sweater and khaki pants, he looked down much of the time but occasionally glanced at the potential jurors and the judge. He also picked at his shaggy beard.

When U.S. District Judge George O'Toole Jr. introduced him to the first group of prospective jurors and asked him to stand, he acknowledged them with a slight nod.

Tsarnaev, 21, is accused of planning and carrying out the twin pressure-cooker bombings that killed three people and wounded more than 260 near the finish line of the race on April 15, 2013.

Prosecutors say Dzhokhar and his brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev — ethnic Chechens who had lived in the United States for about a decade — carried out the bombings in retaliation for U.S. actions in Muslim countries. Tamerlan, 26, died after a firefight with police days after the bombings.

The defense is expected to

argue that Dzhokhar had a difficult childhood and was heavily influenced by his elder brother, who authorities believe became radicalized in the last few years of his life.

Over the next three days, a larger-than-normal pool of about 1,200 people will be

O'Toole briefly outlined the 30 charges against Tsarnaev, which include using a weapon of mass destruction. He is also accused of killing an MIT police officer as he and his brother, now dead, tried to flee days after the bombings.

The jury will be asked to

of the U.S. legal system. Recently, one of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's sisters pleaded guilty in Boston to misleading police during a counterfeiting investigation but was spared a jail sentence. "All the information that can refute the allegations against my sons is on the Internet," Anzor Tsarnaev said by telephone from Grozny, the capital of Chechnya. "I still have children in America and I am afraid for them. As you all know, they also caused problems for my younger daughter with fabricated allegations. Who knows what they could do with my other children?"

The juror questionnaires that will be used to weed out people with potential conflicts. Eventually, lawyers for the government and Tsarnaev, along with the judge, will question potential jurors individually.

The questionnaire was sealed by the judge and details of what the prospective jurors were asked were not made public.

The trial is perhaps the most scrutinized case of its kind since Timothy McVeigh was convicted and executed for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Tsarnaev's lawyers tried for months to get the trial moved, arguing the Boston jury pool was tainted because of the number of locals with connections to the race. They drew parallels to the McVeigh case, which was moved to Denver.



Members of the legal defense team for Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, including Miriam Conrad, far left, and Judy Clarke, far right, return to the federal courthouse after a lunch break in Boston on the first day of jury selection Monday, Jan. 5, 2015, in Tsarnaev's trial. Tsarnaev, 21, is accused of planning and carrying out the twin pressure-cooker bombings that killed three people and wounded more than 260 near the finish line of the race on April 15, 2013.

(AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

summoned to federal court to be considered as potential jurors.

The first two groups of 200 people each were given initial instructions Monday by O'Toole and then began filling out long questionnaires.

Twelve jurors and six alternates will ultimately be selected. The judge said testimony in the trial will begin on Jan. 26 and last three to four months.

decide both whether Tsarnaev is guilty and, if he is convicted, what his punishment will be: life in prison or death.

Dozens of police officers were posted inside and outside the courthouse. One bombing victim, Karen Brassard, was outside the jury room, waiting to observe jury selection.

In Russia, the father of the Tsarnaev brothers again expressed the family's distrust

Son arrested in NYC hedge fund chief shooting

COLLEEN LONG

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A 30-year-old man shot his hedge fund founder father to death inside his Manhattan apartment after the two argued over the son's allowance, police said Monday.

Thomas Gilbert Jr. was arrested on charges of murder and criminal possession of a weapon in the death of Thomas Gilbert Sr., 70. He was being held pending arraignment and the law office representing him had no comment.

Police said Gilbert Jr. went to his parents' home on Sunday afternoon and asked his mother to go out to get him some food. About 15 minutes later, she got a "bad feeling" and came back, said Robert Boyce, the chief of detectives for the New York Police Department.

"She found Senior on the floor with a bullet hole in the head," Boyce said. "She also found a gun resting on his chest with his left hand covering it."

But Boyce said it was a staged suicide — his son was trying to cover up the killing. Officers with a search warrant went to Gilbert Jr.'s apartment, where they found magazines, loose bullets and a shell that matched the gun found at the scene, police said. Authorities were investigating how he got the gun.

Gilbert Jr. was in debt and had argued with his father over his allowance, police said.

In 2011, the elder Gilbert founded Wainscott Capital Partners Fund, which has \$200 million in assets. Industry publication Hedge Fund Alert said in an August 2013 article that the fund had a net return of nearly 25 percent in 2012. He was a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Business School. Gilbert Jr. also attended Princeton, graduating in 2009 with a degree in economics.

Texas murder suspect held in Mexico; 2 more slain

PETER ORSI

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A man sought in connection with a fatal New Year's Day shooting in South Texas was in custody Monday in Mexico, where he's also suspected of killing a taxi driver and a police officer. Ignacio Ruiz, 36, who is wanted for the killing of a man near San Antonio, was arrested Saturday in the Mexican border city of Piedras Negras, U.S. Marshal Robert Almonte said. The Lone Star Fugitive Task

Force, a joint operating program within the United States Marshals Service, said that after the Jan. 1 killing Ruiz fled to Piedras Negras where he "allegedly committed multiple robberies" and kidnapped a taxi driver.

When the cabbie tried to alert a police officer, Ruiz allegedly shot both and wounded two bystanders, according to a Task Force statement. It added that he was taken into custody unharmed and would remain in Mexico to face

charges.

Twitter accounts for Piedras Negras Mayor Fernando Puron and the city government identified the victims as police officer Jaime Antonio Sornia de Luna and taxi driver Felipe Navarrete. "We lament the death of officer Jaime A. Sornia de Luna in the line of duty," Puron's account said.

The sheriff's office in Bexar County, Texas, which was investigating the New Year's Day killing, confirmed that Ruiz was in the custody of Mexican offi-

cials.

Two more arrests were made in Texas, according to the Lone Star Fugitive Task Force: Isidro Lopez, suspected of aiding and abetting Ruiz's flight to Mexico; and Ismael Ruiz, the prime suspect's brother, who was wanted on a prior warrant for allegedly assaulting a peace officer.

Almonte called it a "remarkable collaboration" by law enforcement agencies in the United States and Mexico.

US Financial Front:

Carmakers finish strong in 2014; are even better days ahead?

**TOM KRISHER
DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writers**

DETROIT (AP) — Buoyed by a resurgent economy, holiday sales, cheap gasoline and a love affair with pickup trucks, Americans headed to car dealers in droves last month, pushing full-year sales to what's likely to be the highest level since 2006.

Toyota, Fiat Chrysler, Nissan, Honda and General Motors all reported strong December and annual U.S. sales early Monday, with Nissan and Honda hitting record numbers for the year. Ford faltered but remained the top-selling brand in the U.S. last year. The figures pointed to a strong finish for 2014. Analysts are predicting sales of 16.5 million vehicles, up 6 percent from last year and a return to pre-recession levels. And Americans are expected to continue buying cars in big numbers this year. Sales are forecast to reach 17 million for the first time since 2005, close to the record of 17.3 million set in 2000.

While sales will grow this year, they will grow at a slower pace than the double-digit increases the country saw in 2011 and 2012, when the industry was still powering back from the recession. That's good news for buyers, who can expect to see bigger discounts in competitive segments like midsize cars as automakers fight to get noticed and steal sales from each other.

Kelley Blue Book expected December sales to be up nearly 10 percent over the previous year to 1.5 million, thanks to holiday promotions and milder-than-usual weather. Automakers report U.S. December and full-year U.S. sales on Monday.

Fiat Chrysler led the way with a 16 percent increase over 2013, selling just over 2 million cars and trucks. It was the company's best year since 2006.

Fiat Chrysler was led by the Ram pickup truck, with sales up 24 percent for the

year. Pickup truck sales rebounded for nearly all automakers through 2014 as small businesses regained confidence and gas prices fell, making the trucks more attractive. Sales of the Jeep Cherokee small SUV were seven times larger than last year, reaching nearly 179,000. Jeep brand sales rose 41 percent for the year to more than 692,000 vehicles, an annual record.

SUVs of all sizes also were hot sellers last year as buyers went for higher seating positions and better cargo-hauling space.

Toyota's sales rose 5 percent last year to just over 2 million. Toyota ended the year on a high note, with December sales up 12 percent. Toyota said its luxury Lexus brand set an all-time monthly sales record in December.

Nissan's sales grew 11 percent for the year to 1.39 million to set an annual record for the company. Nissan's sales were led by the redesigned Rogue small SUV, with sales up 22 percent.

At General Motors, a 19 percent sales gain in December helped drive annual sales up 5 percent to 2.94 million cars and trucks. In December, the Buick brand posted a 32 percent sales gain, while GMC was up 23 percent. Both brands advertised 20 percent discounts off sticker prices.

GM's full-size pickups, the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra, each posted gains of more than 30 percent for the month. The company sold over 81,000 big pickups.

Honda said its sales last year rose 1 percent to 1.54 million cars and trucks. That was enough to post the second-best results in company history and a record for the Honda brand. Honda was led by the CR-V small SUV with a 10 percent sales gain to 335,000. That broke the SUV's annual sales record.

Despite strong sales of the new aluminum-bodied F-150 last month, Ford sales were flat for the year at



Dodge Ram pickup trucks are on display on the lot at Landmark Dodge Chrysler Jeep RAM Monday, Jan. 5, 2015, in Morrow, Ga. Buoyed by a resurgent economy, holiday sales, cheap gasoline and a love affair with pickup trucks, Americans headed to car dealers in droves last month, pushing full-year sales to what's likely to be the highest level since 2006.

(AP Photo/John Bazemore)

2.5 million. But Ford laid claim to being America's top-selling brand for the fifth straight year, and the F-Series remained the top-selling vehicle in America. Ford's December sales were up 1 percent from a year ago for its best December since 2005. Big pickup sales were flat compared with last year at just

over 74,000.

Volkswagen, which has struggled in the U.S. for several years, couldn't take advantage of the growing market last year. Its sales were down 10 percent. But December numbers were up slightly as sales of the newly revamped Golf compact more than doubled.

Low interest rates and loosening credit standards are drawing buyers. Gas prices — which started the year down 33 percent to \$2.23 per gallon nationally, according to AAA — are giving buyers more confidence, whether they're buying their first subcompact or upgrading to a bigger SUV. □

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Israeli group files war crimes claim against Palestinians

JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israel-based rights organization said Monday that it has filed a war crimes complaint against three top Palestinian leaders it accuses of terrorism, torture and civil rights violations.

The Shurat HaDin Law Center filed the complaint at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, The Netherlands, against PLO leaders Jibril Rajoub, Majid Faraj and Rami Hamdalah, the current Palestinian prime minister. The suit follows similar complaints the group filed against Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The move appears to be a longshot as the court receives thousands of such requests and rarely takes action. But it comes a week after the Palestinians announced they would be joining the international

court to pursue war-crimes charges against Israel. The gambit opened them up to their own set of potential war crimes allegations over rocket attacks by the extremist group Hamas on Israeli population centers and other violence against Jewish targets.

Ahmad Assaf, a spokesman for the Fatah wing of the PLO, rejected the accusations. He said the ICC should focus on Israel and

that "people under occupation have the right to resist their occupiers, according to the international law."

Abbas has been under heavy pressure to take stronger action against Israel amid months of rising tensions over the collapse of U.S.-brokered peace talks last spring and a 50-day war between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza over the summer.

In a related development, the ICC said the Palestinians have notified them that they would accept ICC jurisdiction as of June 13, 2014.

The choice of date appears aimed at including allegations against Israel relating to the Gaza war but avoiding charges against the Palestinians over the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teenagers that predated it. □

Lebanon imposes new limits on Syrians fleeing civil war

**DIAA HADID
BASSEM MROUE**
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon turned back Syrians trying to cross the border Monday under strict new visa regulations, saying it simply cannot handle any more people displaced by the ongoing civil war.

The policy, requiring Syrians to obtain visas that sharply limit the time they can stay in Lebanon, effectively narrows one of the few escape routes left from a conflict that has displaced a third of Syria's pre-war population and shows no sign of ending.

Humanitarian groups dealing with Syrian refugees say authorities should not close the doors on people who are desperate to leave.

Leading politician Walid Jumblatt said there should be difference in dealing with "refugees who are fleeing death and destruc-



A soldier checks the passports of Syrian citizens at the gate at the Lebanese border crossing point of Masnaa, eastern Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, Monday, Jan. 5, 2015. Lebanon began imposing unprecedented restrictions Monday on the entry of Syrians, as the tiny country with a fragile sectarian balance struggles to cope with well over a million refugees fleeing the civil war next door.

(AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

tion in Syria after they lost their homes," and those who come to Lebanon for political activities.

"The vast majority of them left Syria because of fear

of war, and they are innocent," Jumblatt said in comments published Monday in his party's weekly Al-Anbaa.

The violence in Syria be-

tween forces loyal to President Bashar Assad and those opposed to his rule have caused more than 3 million people to flee the country, mainly to neighboring Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. Western countries have only accepted small numbers of refugees, and hundreds of people have drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea on rickety smuggler ships. More than 200,000 people have been killed since the uprising began in 2011.

Lebanese officials say they can't absorb any more, estimating there are about 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon, about one-quarter of the total population. Some 1.1 million are registered with the U.N.'s refugee agency. "We have enough. There's no capacity anymore to host more displaced," Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk said at

a televised news conference. The United States warned against creating more challenges for Syrian refugees and urged Lebanon to work with U.N. officials to ensure that those fleeing violence and persecution would still be able to enter the country.

"We will continue to strongly encourage the governments of the region to provide for a refuge for asylum seekers," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said. Lebanese security officials had no exact numbers on how many Syrians were turned back Monday at the border. The flow of Syrians through one popular crossing appeared to be lower than normal.

In recent months, several thousand Syrians had been crossing into Lebanon every day, the officials said. There are no plans to forcibly repatriate those Syrians already in Lebanon. □

Islamic leader urges Muslims to visit Jerusalem holy site

RAWHI RAZIM
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The head of the world's largest Islamic organization on Monday paid a rare visit to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, urging Muslims to follow suit to strengthen Palestinian claims to the holy site.

The visit by Iyad Madani, secretary-general of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation, came at a sensitive time following months of tensions sur-

rounding the spot in Jerusalem's Old City. The hilltop compound is revered by Jews and Muslims and is a frequent flashpoint of violence.

Madani is a citizen of Saudi Arabia, an Arab country that does not have diplomatic relations with Israel and is the guardian of Islam's most important sites. Al-Aqsa is Islam's third-holiest site, after places in the Saudi cities of Mecca and Medina.

"Coming to the mosque is

a right for me as well as every Muslim," Madani said. "It is our right to come here and to pray here. No occupation authority should take this right from us."

Israel captured east Jerusalem, including the Old City, in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed the area in a move that is not internationally recognized. The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

The hilltop compound housing Al-Aqsa lies at the

heart of the dispute over Jerusalem. Known to Jews as the Temple Mount, it is their most sacred place, revered as the home to the ancient Hebrew temples. The conflicting claims to the site have often spilled over into violence, most recently late last year as visits to the compound by nationalist Jews fueled rumors that Israel was plotting to take it over. Israel angrily denied the claims, but the tensions led to violent protests by Palestinians, Israeli restric-

tions on Muslim access and a wave of Palestinian attacks that killed 11 people. While Madani's predecessor, a Turk, also visited Jerusalem, visits by Saudi dignitaries are rare and need to be coordinated with Israel. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has encouraged Muslims to visit Jerusalem in solidarity with the Palestinians, despite claims by some religious leaders that the city should be avoided while under Israeli control. □

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Defiant Dresden protesters to proceed with anti-immigrant rally

ALISON SMALE

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DRESDEN, Germany - Defying appeals from an array of German institutions, anti-immigrant marchers planned to rally again here Monday, parading their stated fear of Europe's Islamization along with their emergence as a force of thousands of protesters commanding national attention.

The protesters, rallied by a murky movement known as PEGIDA, a German acronym for Patriotic Europeans Against Islamization of the West, swelled to 17,500 outside Dresden's historic Semper opera house before Christmas and were the talk of Germany throughout the holidays. In her New Year's address, Chancellor Angela Merkel appealed to Germans to avoid the marches and their organizers, who she said had "prejudice, coldness and even hatred in their hearts."

By Monday, business leaders had joined the swelling chorus against PEGIDA from established political parties, the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, social groups - some of which planned pro-immigration rallies in cities around Germany - and even from anonymous jokesters who set up a spoof "Snowgida" page on Facebook.

Ingo Kramer, head of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, said that "Germany's image as a business location is being damaged by the impression that we are demonstrating against foreigners."

"We need immigration for our labor market and to allow our social system to function," he added in a statement.

The fear of foreigners,

and especially of Muslims, threatening or drowning out national and regional identities forged over centuries seems to have a growing pull in Europe, where populists and nationalists scored record votes in last May's elections for the European Parliament.

Since reuniting in 1990, Germany has experienced

insist they are not against asylum or refugees, but they resent abuse of the system and helping "economic refugees" whom the anti-immigrant camp sees as either threatening German jobs or mooching off Germany's generous welfare system.

An anti-euro party, the Alternative for Germany, is flirting with anti-foreigner

ing status, even if - in Dresden and the surrounding state of Saxony - barely 2 percent of residents are foreigners and even fewer are Muslims.

Berthold Kohler, a publisher of the influential center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, noted on Monday in a commentary titled "Terribly Simple," that despite Merkel's commit-

to continue guaranteeing a welcome for hundreds of thousands of legitimate refugees, particularly from Syria and Iraq.

"People are reacting to the situation with much understanding, empathy and remarkable voluntary engagement," the party said in the proposal. "This readiness to help should not be toyed with." All who are



Participants of a rally called 'Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West' (PEGIDA) hold German flags during a demonstration in Dresden, Germany, Monday, Jan. 5, 2015. Over the last three months, the crowds at PEGIDA's demonstrations in the eastern city of Dresden, a region that has few immigrants or Muslims, have swelled from a few hundred to 17,500 just before Christmas. Police said similar numbers turned out again Monday night. (AP Photo/Jens Meyer)

outbursts of racist violence, directed against foreigners, and often in the east, where barely 1 percent of the population was non-German in Communist times. In recent years, however, the Germans have offered asylum liberally, beginning with refugees of the Balkan wars in the early 1990s. The Nazi past is often cited as a reason to roll out the welcome mat, but that has worn thin in recent months because of an influx of about 200,000 asylum seekers last year - four times the total for 2012 - and the strain of housing so many people.

Dresden's demonstrators

sentiment and won seats in three state legislatures in eastern Germany last fall. While its leaders are bickering furiously, at least some have attended the Dresden rallies and are willing to meet with PEGIDA.

Across the established political spectrum, argument has raged about whether to engage directly with PEGIDA, as well as how to confront its clear appeal for a disgruntled segment of the German population. Its supporters include known far rightists, neo-Nazis and soccer hooligans, as well as a larger number of average citizens who seem worried about los-

ted stand against the PEGIDA movement, it was clear that her grand coalition government of center-right and center-left was still trying to figure out what to do. The movement, he said, is "the tip of the iceberg" when it comes to a loss of faith in elites or institutions across the board. Merkel's partners in her conservative bloc, the Bavarian Christian Social Union, plans to debate what it calls "a fair and balanced asylum policy" at a meeting this week. It seeks swifter processing of asylum requests and deportation of abusers, portraying this as the only way

helping should be thanked, it added, "for they are the face of modern Germany, open to the world."

Among the many voices discussing PEGIDA were two writers, Peter Schneider and Monika Maron, who each published over the weekend their impressions of a visit to the last PEGIDA rally on Dec. 22.

"For my taste," Schneider wrote in the newspaper Die Welt, "the crowd was too white." He also reported being "not so much alarmed but saddened" by the feeble rendering of Christmas carols for which the anti-Islam crowd had ostensibly assembled. □

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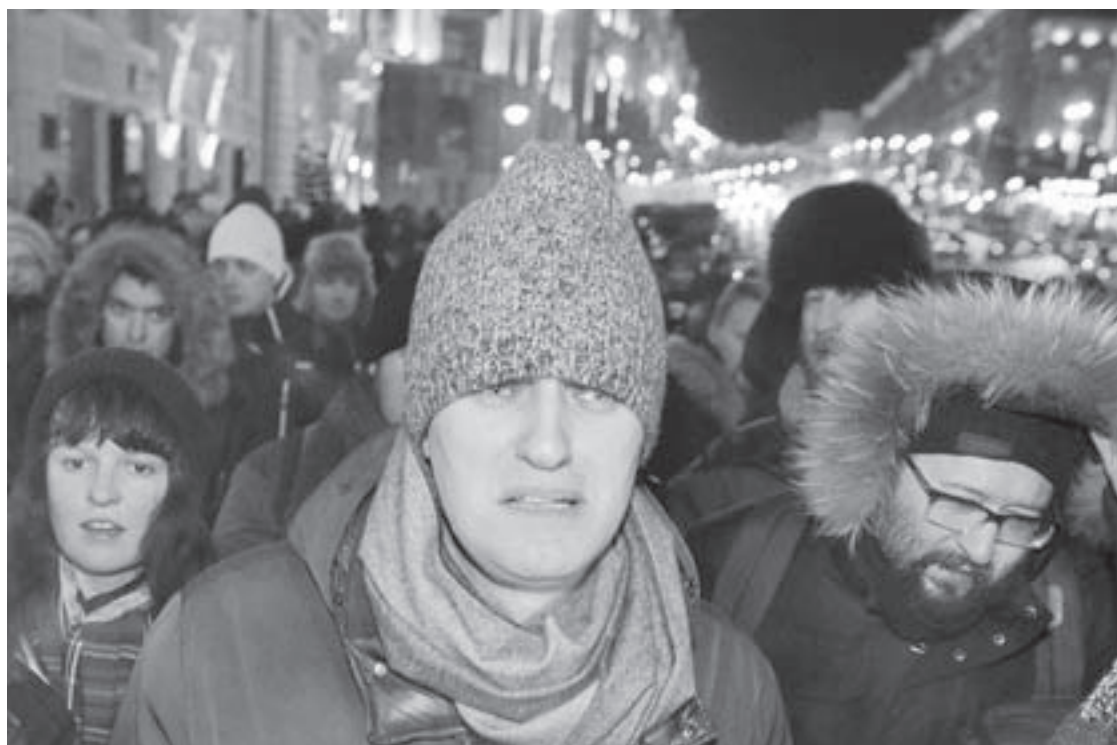
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Navalny removes tracking bracelet in challenge to Kremlin



In this photo taken on Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014, Russian opposition activist and anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny, 38, walks to attend a rally in Manezhnaya Square in Moscow, Russia. Navalny on Monday snipped the electronic bracelet used by the authorities to monitor his whereabouts and personally declared an end to his more than 10 months of house arrest.

(AP Photo/Anton Belitski)

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
© 2015 New York Times

MOSCOW - Taunting the Kremlin yet again, the Rus-

sian political opposition leader Alexei A. Navalny on Monday snipped the electronic bracelet used

by the authorities to monitor his whereabouts and personally declared an end to his more than 10

months of house arrest. Navalny's latest challenge to the authorities came six days after a Moscow court convicted him of criminal embezzlement charges but issued a 3 1/2-year suspended sentence, sparing him jail time.

Navalny, a lawyer who rose to prominence as a blogger crusading against pervasive state corruption, has emerged in recent years as President Vladimir Putin's chief domestic antagonist.

Organized opposition to Putin has weakened in recent months. But the reluctance of the authorities to put Navalny in prison suggests that he poses a conundrum as they try to restrict his political activities, while not turning him into a martyr.

Navalny has been under house arrest since late February in connection with the criminal case. He and

his younger brother, Oleg, were accused of defrauding a Russian subsidiary of the French perfume company Yves Rocher by overcharging for shipping services provided by a courier company they owned.

Lawyers had said they had expected Navalny's house arrest to end as soon as the verdict and suspended sentence were officially registered with the correctional authorities. In a statement Monday, however, Navalny said that no paperwork had come through and that he would no longer remain confined to his apartment on the outskirts of Moscow.

"It's stupid to boast about this," Navalny wrote in the statement, which was posted online. "But I'm the only man in the history of the Russian courts to sit in house arrest after the sentence was issued."

He described the unexplained technicalities that appeared to prolong his house arrest even though the judge's ruling had been issued.

"Everyone asks me, 'Have you already filed the appeal? When will there be an appeal?'" Navalny wrote. "Of course, there is no appeal yet, and there can't be one. There is no text of the verdict, and there is nothing to appeal. This is the genius stroke of Putin's justice."

The embezzlement case, widely understood as retribution for Navalny's political opposition to Putin, was one of several criminal prosecutions that have been brought against him in recent years.

Oleg Navalny also was convicted in the embezzlement case, but his sentence was not suspended; he was jailed immediately after the verdict was issued. □

France's Hollande:

Destabilizing sanctions on Russia 'must stop now

ANDREW E. KRAMER

© 2015 New York Times

MOSCOW - Western nations should stop threatening Russia with new sanctions and instead offer to ease off on existing restrictions in exchange for progress in the peace process in Ukraine, President François Hollande of France said in an interview on Monday. Backing President Vladimir Putin into a corner will not work, he said, giving a high-level voice to what is seen as mounting sanctions fatigue among European politicians, as the Ukraine crisis lurches into a second year.

"I'm not for the policy of attaining goals by making things worse," Hollande said in the interview on

France Inter radio. "I think that sanctions must stop now."

Russia's position is misunderstood, he suggested. "Mr. Putin does not want to annex eastern Ukraine, I am sure - he told me so," Hollande said. "What he wants is to remain influential. What Mr. Putin wants is that Ukraine not become a member of NATO. The idea of Mr. Putin is to not have an army at Russia's borders."

In Germany, a vice chancellor, Sigmar Gabriel, also signaled concerns about the effect of sanctions on Russia's stability.

"The goal was never to push Russia politically and economically into chaos," Gabriel told the Bild am

Sonntag newspaper.

Germany is the most influential European voice on the sanctions issue, and it is widely assumed that little will happen without the approval of its chancellor, Angela Merkel. A spokesman for Merkel, Steffen Seibert, clarified to Reuters that "we have a very clear idea of what constitutes real progress" before Germany will consider lifting existing sanctions.

Peace talks between the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany are scheduled for Jan. 15, but Merkel will not attend unless a new agreement seems likely, Seibert said.

Whatever Putin's assurances to Hollande, in eastern Ukraine over the weekend

an ataman, or Cossack leader, posted a video pledging allegiance to Putin.

Nikolai Kozitsyn, who leads a Don Cossack group based in the town of Antracit that was never more than loosely affiliated with the main rebel organization in that area, the Luhansk People's Republic, posted a video asserting that his territory was now part of the "Russian empire."

Violence in the east that had been waning picked up in recent days, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported Monday, particularly around the city of Donetsk, the monitoring group said. □



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China eases controls on rare earths after WTO complaint

BEIJING (AP) — China has scrapped its export quotas for rare earths, minerals used in mobile phones and other high-tech products, after losing a World Trade Organization case brought by Washington and other trading partners over controls that alarmed global technology producers.

The change was included in the Ministry of Commerce's trade guidelines for 2015 but there was no separate announcement. Under the new guidelines, rare earths will require an export license but the amount that can be sold abroad will no longer be covered by a quota. China's curbs, imposed in 2009, prompted concern about supplies for global technology producers. They led to efforts to reopen or develop new mines in the United States and elsewhere, and by Japan and some other countries to recycle rare earths.

China has about 30 percent of global deposits of rare earths but accounts for more than 90 percent of production. It imposed export limits while it tried to build up domestic manufacturers to capture more of the profits that go to Western and Japanese producers of mobile phone batteries and other products.

Beijing cited the need to conserve a dwindling resource and limit environmental damage from mining but imposed no restrictions on production and use of rare earths by companies within China.

Chinese officials have expressed hope foreign manufacturers that use rare earths will shift production to China and give technology to local partners.

The United States challenged the quotas in 2012 in a WTO complaint and later was joined by the European Union, Japan and other governments. They said China violated its free trade commitments by limiting access to raw materials.

Rare earths are 17 minerals used to make goods including hybrid cars, weapons, flat-screen TVs, mobile phones, mercury-vapor lights and camera lenses.

The United States supplied its own rare earths needs from domestic sources until the late 1990s. Production ended after low-cost Chinese ores flooded global markets.

Beijing also tightened control over its rare earths industry by pushing companies to merge into state-owned groups and forcing smaller producers to close.

The export controls were especially sensitive at a time following the 2008 financial crisis when governments were trying to boost exports to reduce unemployment. The United States and Europe want to increase sales of high-tech goods that include products made with rare earths.

China exported 22,493 tons of rare earths in 2013 and 22,224 tons in the first ten months of 2014, according to customs data reported by state media.

The Chinese restrictions prompted some foreign manufacturers to shift to alternative materials for making magnets, polishing camera lenses and other uses.

The market price of rare earths spiked in 2011 amid fears of shortages. Prices have declined since then but are above 2010 levels. □



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro speaks during a press conference at Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas, Venezuela. Venezuela's socialist government confirmed the economy fell into a deep recession last year but blamed the slump on opponents trying to sabotage activity in the oil-rich nation. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

Venezuela:

Maduro on visit to China to talk finance

HANNAH DREIER

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) —

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro was travelling to China Monday to discuss financing as the South American nation attempts to dig out of a deep recession.

China is the socialist country's largest creditor and Maduro said Sunday that he would talk about Venezuela's oil-for-loans agreements with President Xi Jinping, as well as economic, education and technology projects.

Venezuela is struggling with the world's highest inflation, a newly confirmed recession and a cash crunch brought about partly by a steep fall in the price of oil.

"To me, this is Venezuela really needing the money," said Evan Ellis, professor of Latin American Studies at the U.S. Army

War College Strategic Studies Institute.

China has loaned Venezuela more than \$40 billion over the past five years, some of which Venezuela has already paid down with oil deliveries. At the end of December, Maduro announced that he would make the economy his chief focus in 2015. Critics say Venezuela must make painful adjustments to right the economy, such as a currency devaluation or a hike in gasoline prices.

Maduro also announced that he will visit other members of the oil cartel OPEC. Venezuela has unsuccessfully urged OPEC nations to work together to drive up oil prices, which have fallen by half in six months. Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves, and depends on oil for 95 percent of its export income.

Maduro called the trip "a very important tour to take on new projects, given the circumstance we have in our country, including falling revenue and the plummeting price of oil." China finds itself in the uncomfortable situation of needing to invest in the South American country to ensure its alliance remains strong, and that Venezuela can eventually pay back its loans, but also being reluctant to loan more money to the struggling country, according to Ellis. This fall, China loosened the term of its loan, extending a repayment deadline and scrapping minimum shipment requirements. "The Chinese have been throwing good money after bad for a while. If Maduro is asking for even more money now, it will be interesting to see how the Chinese react," he said. □

Is European Union ready for Greek Crisis 2.0?

DAVID McHUGH

Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)

— Talk of Greece crashing out of the euro is back.

And the question of whether Europe can handle another crisis in Greece is

the eurozone as the original Greek crisis and default in 2010-2012. They claim the currency bloc has new safeguards. Most investors seem to agree for now.

Others argue that's dangerous complacency.

the potential fallout from a Greek debt default or even a euro exit shouldn't be downplayed. The eurozone's troubles are big news for the global economy, since it's a major trade partner for the U.S., Eastern

leave the bloc if the troubled country decides to renege on the terms of its bailout loans. Greece's left-wing Syriza party is leading in polls ahead of early elections scheduled for Jan. 25. The party has proposed tearing up the agreement under which Greece got bailout loans worth 240 billion euros (currently \$286 billion) from other eurozone governments and the International Monetary Fund.

Syriza is riding a wave of popular discontent over the tax increases and cuts to public spending, wages and pensions that were demanded in the bailout deal. Yet Greece still needs financial support to pay its debts. German government spokesman Stefan Seibert said that Germany's policy "has been to strengthen the eurozone including Greece. This has not changed."

Here is a look at the risks involved and what might happen.

out fund that can loan to troubled countries if bond investors won't. Another is the European Central Bank's offer to buy the government bonds of countries that get into trouble, a move that would aim to ensure their borrowing rates are affordable.

Holger Schmieding at Berenberg Bank says Syriza and Greece's creditors are likely to strike some sort of deal. He pegs the possibility of "a major accident," such as Greece's exit from the eurozone, at 30 percent. Even if Greece were to default or leave the euro, the market impact could be contained, he says. "Greek politics pose a threat to Greece itself, but no longer to the stability of the eurozone as a whole." So far that's been the case. Greek stocks and bonds have plunged, but borrowing costs for other heavily indebted countries such as Italy remain low, suggesting investors don't believe Greece's troubles will threaten other eurozone members.



The billboard of a currency office shows the exchange rates in Rome, Monday, Jan. 5, 2015. The euro sank to a nine-year low Monday as new doubts surfaced about Greece's commitment to the common currency bloc. European stocks mostly rose while Asian markets were mixed.

(AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

heightening financial uncertainty for the currency union just as it is struggling to grow and create jobs.

Some analysts and politicians say Greece 2.0 wouldn't be as rough on

They say the eurozone's newly installed defenses against financial turmoil aren't as tough as some think. That means Greek problems could spread to other countries — so that

Europe and Asia.

Speculation of a Greek exit intensified Monday after Der Spiegel magazine reported that Germany, the eurozone's biggest power, was willing to let Greece

RING FENCED

Some experts argue the eurozone has set up new defenses against any financial trouble in Greece. Those include the European Stability Mechanism, a taxpayer-backed bail-

BEWARE

Mujtaba Rahman at Eurasia Group says the eurozone isn't as protected as some think.

The ECB's offer to buy a country's bonds is still facing a legal challenge at the European Court of Justice from opponents in Germany. Meanwhile, ESM money comes with painful conditions that governments may be unwilling to accept. And Europe is vulnerable because of slow growth and the threat of crippling deflation, or falling prices. Italy in particular remains heavily in debt and has passed only limited reforms to make its economy more competitive.

"If anything, Crisis 2.0 could be more severe, precisely because the larger countries that weren't subject to reform programs in 2010, Italy and France, are much more vulnerable," Rahman said. "Growth is bad, the inflation outlook is problematic, debt sustainability is an open question." □

US gives green light to beef from Ireland

DOUGLAS DALBY

© 2015 New York Times

DUBLIN - Irish beef will be the first from Europe to be sold in the United States in almost 16 years, after the lifting of a ban that had stemmed from an outbreak of mad cow disease in the late 1990s.

The United States had agreed to lift the ban last year, and Ireland is the first European country since then to have met the requirements ensuring its beef was safe. Although any Irish imports might represent only a tiny fraction of U.S. meat sales, Ireland might be likely to find a market among buyers seeking beef raised in pastures and free from artificial growth hormones.

"This U.S. market is a huge prize given its size and the demand we know exists there for premium grass-fed beef," Ireland's agriculture minister, Simon Coveney, said in an official announcement Monday on Irish national radio. "We now have first-mover advantage as a result of being the first EU member state to gain entry. There is also the large Irish-American community, which will be a key target of our promotional efforts."

U.S. authorities imposed the ban over health fears during an epidemic across Europe in the late 1990s that led to mass culling of cattle herds. The formal name for mad cow disease is bovine spongiform encephalopathy, an affliction that kills cattle by attacking the animals' brains and central nervous systems. If tainted meat is consumed, the illness is believed to be capable of causing fatal neurological disorders in humans, mainly through the incurable variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Beef prices in the United States have risen in recent years as a result of droughts and higher feed prices. Australia is a leading exporter of beef to the United States, although most of that meat comes from industrial feed lots - not the open-pasture beef that many Irish farms produce. The demand for premium grass-fed, hormone-free beef in the United States,

particularly in the restaurant trade, is growing an estimated 20 percent a year, Coveney said. Last year, the United States imported around 4 billion euros, or about \$4.8 billion, worth of such beef from countries like Paraguay and Uruguay. Coveney estimates that the market could be worth 100 million euros to the Irish beef industry in 2015.

The approval to begin exports follows an inspection by the U.S. authorities of Irish beef production systems last July, after the formal lifting of the ban in March 2014.

The Irish government hopes the U.S. approval might also open other foreign markets. □



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ba. More information and reviews of Kukoo Kunuku can be found on TripAdvisor- it comes highly recommended from travelers all around the world!

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The Ritz-Carlton Aruba Bids Farewell To 2014

PALM BEACH - As part of the island's New Year's celebrations, the Ladies and Gentlemen of The Ritz-Carlton Aruba and guests came together to celebrate the end of a successful and memorable 2014 with 'Pagara y Dande,' a traditional Aruban New Year's celebration. The firework 'Pagara' was launched by the hotel's General Manager, Steven Redkoles. "We are honored to celebrate this very special Aruban tradition as we bid farewell to 2014," said Steven Redkoles, General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba. "2014 was a successful and exciting year for the island, and we look forward to 2015 and are hopeful it will be the island's very best year, yet."



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Tango Restaurant looks forward to Marcy & Ernie's next visit



PALM BEACH - Marcie and Ernie from Lafayette Hill in Pennsylvania visited Tango Restaurant in the Arawak Garden for the first time ten years ago. They have fond memories of that time, as they celebrated Marcie's parents' 60th Anniversary in the company of the entire family. Twelve people had a great time on Aruba, but especially at Tango. But that was not the only time they celebrated an



event on Aruba: Marcie and Ernie also renewed their wedding vows here. The island has a special place in their hearts, therefore. Every time they are on Aruba they

enjoy the wonderful combination of delicious food and lovely drinks at Tango Argentine Grill and they enjoy the Arawak Garden's live music. At Tango they are always

happy to see Marcy and Ernie; as a matter of fact the staff is already looking forward to next year's visit of this great couple. Best Holiday wishes to you, good friends! □

ALHYDRAN, a highly recommended medical moisture-regulating gel-cream in burn clinics worldwide, now locally available.

Tourists and locals love Aruba Aloe's skin care and sun care products, but what most people don't know is that Aruba Aloe also produces a highly concentrated moisture-regulating gel-cream called *Alhydran*, which is used for the aftercare treatment of burn scars, surgical wounds, redness, itching, rashes after laser therapy or radiotherapy, and other scar tissue. This very effective cream has become one of the new standards in scar treatment in university hospitals and burn clinics worldwide. Sold in over 22 countries, this unique Aruban export product is now locally available in all Aruba Aloe stores and on www.arubaaloe.com.

A success story

Wim Arns, a middle-aged Dutch man, got severely burned on his hands and face when cigar ashes drifted down into a bucket of paraffin oil he was holding, causing a spontaneous explosion. Wim: "After being treated in the Burn Centre in Rotterdam, the doctors referred me to a skin therapist in my hometown to continue the aftercare of the burn scars. My skin felt really tight and itchy, and I wanted a cream to help with this. That's when the therapist recommended *Alhydran*. Already within an hour of applying the cream, I felt my skin had more space to breathe and the itching stopped. My face has healed completely, the skin has total flexibility again, and the same goes for my hands. Therapy certainly contributed to this, but I attribute the flexibility of the skin and eradication of the itching to the use of *Alhydran*."

Alhydran through the eyes of a professional

Rina Rijkenberg is a certified skin therapist in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands. As a specialist, she has different skin products to choose from, but *Alhydran* is her #1 solution. Rina: "A lot of complaints are that the skin feels dry, itchy, red, sensitive, and painful, which are symptoms frequently associated with burn victims, lymph edema patients, and people who have undergone radiation therapy or have general scar tissue, acne, or excessive hair. All this can be caused by a deregulation in the moisture levels of the skin. The secret to *Alhydran* is that it regulates the moisture levels of the skin continuously in an unprecedented way. A very high dosage of pure Aloe Vera gel delivers the hydration, and pure Vitamin C, Vitamin E, and Jojoba oil prolong the activity. Patients can actually see and feel their skin healing."

Visit Aruba Aloe to receive a free sample of Alhydran

Alhydran is now available in all Aruba Aloe stores and on www.arubaaloe.com. Aruba Aloe invites both tourists and locals to visit its stores, mention the promotion code **NEWSPAPER**, and receive a free sample of *Alhydran* to experience its amazing benefits for themselves.

Points of Sale

For more information about the locations of our Aruba Aloe stores, please consult the list below or visit www.arubaaloe.com/stores online.

- Aruba Aloe Factory & Museum Store (Hato)
- Aruba Aloe Renaissance
- Aruba Aloe La Cabana
- Aruba Aloe Paseo Herencia (Shopping mall)
- Aruba Aloe Alhambra
- Aruba Aloe Arawak (Palm beach)
- Aruba Aloe Cruise Terminal (APA Cruise Terminal)

- Aruba Aloe Divi Links (Divi Aruba Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Tamarijn (Tamarijn Aruba Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Occidental (Occidental Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Marriott Ocean Club
- Aruba Aloe Riu Palace Antillas
- Aruba Aloe Main Street
- Aruba Aloe at The Village (In front of Radisson Resort)



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For any inquiries about *Alhydran*, please contact Melissa Acosta, Customer Service, at Aruba Aloe Balm N.V. T: +297 588 3222 or Email: customerservice@arubaaloe.com

In Connection with their 30th Anniversary:

Alhambra Casino Celebrates Successful 2014, Welcomes 2015!



EAGLE BEACH - Alhambra Casino summarized the year 2014 as a very important one. At the beginning of the year, Alhambra finished its last renovation phase inside the casino. The World Cup campaign in June was a huge success. Another big change was the Player's Club upgrade to provide an even bigger player experience towards the overall service of their clients. Soon after, there was the 30th Anniversary Campaign, where the Casino raffled 30 thousand florins in free games amongst their loyal customers.

Alhambra Casino said goodbye to 2014 and welcomes 2015 with 5x points. Your cashback or points earned will be five times more than what you played. It's as simple as: "play 1 point and receive 5". For the table players: You will get paid five times more with an Ace and Jack of Spades. Alhambra Casino takes this opportunity to say "Thank You" to the entire Aruban community, our employees, our local clientele and visitors for a great year 2014, full of challenges and goals to make, but always with the thrill for action and a good time. The devoted staff of the Alhambra casino wishes you all "A Happy Year 2015!" □





Trio of aces poised to lead Hall of Fame class of 2015

By **HOWIE RUMBERG**

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) -- Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez and John Smoltz appear to be shoo-ins for election to the Hall of Fame in what is shaping up as the baseball writers' biggest class of inductees in 60 years. When the Hall of Fame reveals the results Tuesday at 2 p.m. on the MLB Network, holdover Craig Biggio and perhaps Mike Piazza could join those three first-ballot pitchers who were utterly dominant in a hitters' era of artificially bulging statistics.

Here are some things to know about the balloting, conducted again in a period when who's elected is as intriguing as whose names were not checked by Baseball Writers' Association of America voters: **THE THREE ACES**

Johnson, Martinez and Smoltz stand out among the 17 newcomers to the ballot.

The reed-thin, scraggly-haired Johnson is a five-time Cy Young Award winner - four in a row from 1999-2002 - with 303 wins and 4,875 strikeouts. The Big Unit came up big in the postseason, too, sharing MVP honors in the 2001 World Series with Arizona Diamondbacks teammate Curt Schilling.

Martinez's antics off the field were nearly as enthralling as an ever-elusive changeup that helped him to three Cy Youngs - two AL, one NL - and a 2.93 ERA in 18 years. He helped bring the Boston Red Sox their first World Series championship in 86 years.

Smoltz was a steady presence on the Atlanta Braves' staff for 20 seasons - including 14 straight division titles from 1991-2005 - winning the 1996 NL Cy Young. A career starter,



From left are Arizona Diamondbacks' Randy Johnson in 2008, Boston Red Sox' Pedro Martinez in 2003 and Atlanta Braves' John Smoltz in 2008. Johnson, Martinez and Smoltz are among 17 newcomers on baseball's 2015 Hall of Fame ballot, announced Monday, Nov. 24, 2014.

Smoltz smoothly moved into the closer role for three full seasons and earned 154 saves. He should join former teammates Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine, last year's inductees along with Frank Thomas.

The induction ceremony in Cooperstown will take place July 26.

BALLOT LOGJAM

Not since 1955, when Joe DiMaggio, Gabby Hartnett, Ted Lyons and Dazzy Vance all gained entrance into the Hall, have four players received the necessary 75 percent of the vote from the BBWAA.

Five were elected at the same time on just one occasion, and that was the initial Hall class of 1936.

With the ballot jammed by big names from the Steroids Era, the BBWAA has recommended to the Hall's board of directors that it increase the number of players each voter can select from 10 to 12. That change could come as soon as 2016.

THE PED FACTOR

Suspected and admitted

users of performance-enhancing drugs have been on the ballot since Mark McGwire was a first-timer in 2007.

But the real debate over PEDs and players' credentials heated up when otherwise certain locks Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens became eligible three years ago.

Both glamour stars severely tarnished by steroid use accusations received about 35 percent of the vote last year, a slight dip from their first ballots.

Piazza, who received 62.2 percent in his second year on the ballot, and Jeff Bagwell (54.3 percent) are two players who have fallen under suspicion of use but were never caught up in any investigation.

Will one more year on the ballot help them get closer to the threshold? Perhaps an enhanced ballot of up to 12 votes per writer next year will give them the nudge they need if they fail this year.

CLOSING IN

Biggio, the Houston Astros

second baseman-outfielder with 3,060 hits, fell two votes shy of election last year. Piazza, who has more homers than any other catcher in big league history, went up about 5 percent from the previous year.

According to research by Baseball Think Factory, Biggio was up to 82.9 percent of the vote on 158 public ballots sourced by the website - that's about 27.7 percent of the vote, based on last year's totals. Piazza was at 76.6 percent late Monday afternoon.

Several others on the ballot of 34 candidates are hoping to get a better look. Tim Lincecum (46.1 percent last year), hit .294 with a .385 on-base percentage

in a 23-year career for six teams. The prototypical leadoff hitter scored 1,571 runs and stole 808 bases. Career designated hitter Edgar Martinez received 35.9 percent, Curt Schilling got 29.2 and Mike Mussina 20.3 percent in 2014.

These players get only 10 years on the BBWAA ballot, recently reduced from 15 years maximum.

NEXT YEAR

Next year's ballot should open up some after the election of this year's expected jumbo class and the amended voting rules. There is one sure thing in the 2016 group: Ken Griffey, Jr. He will be joined by Trevor Hoffman, Billy Wagner and Jim Edmonds as the chief newcomers. □

Associated Press



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Caldwell calls for improved use of technology in officiating



Dallas Cowboys outside linebacker Anthony Hitchens (59) gets hit in the back by a pass intended for Detroit Lions tight end Brandon Pettigrew (87) during the fourth quarter of an NFL wildcard playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, in Arlington, Texas.

linebacker Anthony Hitchens. Then officials reversed themselves, leaving Detroit facing fourth down.

The Lions punted, and Dallas drove for the winning touchdown.

"I'm angry about it, and trying to keep my composure here, but I'm probably angry for our team, and the fans," Caldwell said. "That's the thing that stirs your blood." Coaches aren't allowed to signal for replay reviews of potential pass interference calls, but Caldwell indicated Monday he'd like to see the league allow more reviews if possible.

"For the sake of time, and those kinds of things in a game ... you have to have some boundaries," Caldwell said. "I do think that particularly in big games and down the stretch, and playoffs, and things of that nature, I'm not certain there should be a limit on when you can review."

Caldwell said the league reached out to him after the game, although he did not say what was discussed.

Dean Blandino, the league's director of officials, told The Associated Press on Monday that there have been proposals to expand the use of replay

reviews for personal fouls. There also have been proposals to allow coaches to challenge any call.

"The history always has been ever since the first iteration of replay is that we were dealing with fact and not judgment," he said. Subjective calls ... that was something the competition committee felt should not be part of replay and that has been the guideline ever since. "Recently there has been more conversation about adding some of those subjective calls to reviewable plays with the technology we have now. " On the play Sunday, Morelli said the head linesman believed there wasn't enough contact for a penalty, so none was called even though the back judge had thrown a flag.

"I just think that we're all human and we're all affected by our surroundings, environment, big game, issues, noise, etc.," Caldwell said. "It's going to be hard for anybody to convince me otherwise, and I think in that particular case we should try to take as much of the human factor out as we possibly can."

The Lions punted after the sequence, and the Cowboys drove to the winning touchdown late in the fourth quarter. □

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Sports Writer

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP) -- The disputed call in the fourth quarter of Detroit's playoff loss at Dallas was not subject to a replay review.

Lions coach Jim Caldwell wonders if it's time to change that.

"I think without question it was probably not officiated correctly in my estimation," Caldwell said Monday, a

day after Detroit's 24-20 loss. "Nevertheless, I do think in this day and age, with modern times where we have technology that can take out the human factor in certain key situations in big games, that we should use that technology to do so."

With the Lions up 20-17 and in Dallas territory, referee Pete Morelli initially announced a pass interference penalty on Cowboys

Lions-Cowboys game averages 42.3 million viewers on Fox

NEW YORK (AP) -- The Detroit-Dallas game Sunday averaged 42.3 million viewers on Fox, the third-highest total in NFL wild-card history.

The broadcast trailed only the San Francisco-Green Bay game last year on Fox at 47.1 million and the 2012

Pittsburgh-Denver game on CBS at 42.4 million, the NFL and Nielsen said Monday. The Lions-Cowboys game was the most-watched telecast since the Academy Awards averaged 43.6 million viewers on ABC in March.

The four wild-card games

averaged 29.9 million viewers. The Cincinnati-Indianapolis averaged 28.3 million Sunday on CBS. On Saturday, the Baltimore-Pittsburgh game averaged 28.0 million on NBC and the Arizona-Carolina game 21.7 million on ESPN. □

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Rams owner plans NFL stadium in Los Angeles County

MICHAEL R. BLOOD
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, California

(AP) — The owner of the St. Louis Rams plans to build an 80,000-seat stadium in the Los Angeles suburbs, boosting the chances that an NFL team could return to the region.

Stan Kroenke has partnered with Stockbridge Capital Group, owners of the 238-acre Hollywood Park site in Inglewood, on the edge of Los Angeles. Kroenke and Stockbridge say they plan to add a stadium and 6,000-seat performance venue to a massive development of retail, office, hotel and residential space planned for the site of a former horse track.

"This is a perfect location for a venue like this," said Christopher Meany, a senior executive for the joint venture, Hollywood Park Land Co., alluding to its proximity to major freeways, the Los Angeles In-

ternational Airport and The Forum, the former home of the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers. "I don't know of a place that compares to this."

Meany was cautious not to characterize the stadium as an NFL venue, emphasizing that any decision on

moving a team is "entirely in the hands of the NFL." He repeatedly referred to the stadium as "multipurpose," also capable of hosting soccer games.

The proposal was first reported Monday by the Los Angeles Times (<http://lat.ms/1BA13Ye>).



Chris Meany, senior vice president of Hollywood Park Land Company unveils an architectural rendering of a proposed NFL stadium at Hollywood Park in Inglewood, Calif., Monday, Jan. 5, 2015.

Associated Press

The shell of the old race-track would need to be leveled, and stadium construction is not expected to begin before late this year. The development also hinges on approval by local voters, Meany said.

It is the latest of numerous Los Angeles-area NFL stadium proposals over two decades.

But Kroenke's move marks the first time an existing team owner has controlled a local site large enough for a stadium and parking, according to the Times.

The plan will add to pressure on St. Louis to either strike a deal for a new stadium or watch the team return to Southern California, where it played from 1946 to 1994.

The Rams can choose later this month to convert to a year-to-year lease in St. Louis. The team declined to comment on any plans to move, but it's no secret

that it is unhappy in the Edward Jones Dome, which is outdated by current NFL standards.

St. Louis is expected to offer the team a new proposal by the end of the month.

A statement issued by two advisers to Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon said St. Louis and the state "are ready to demonstrate our commitment to keeping the NFL here."

"The news today is another reminder of how much competition there can be for National Football League franchises and projects that include NFL stadiums," said the statement from former Anheuser-Busch executive David Peacock and lawyer Robert Blitz.

"It is important to remember this will be a long-term process, but one that the state of Missouri and the St. Louis region are fully pledged to seeing through," the statement said. □

Bryant's jumper rallies Lakers past Pacers, 88-87

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant scored 20 points and hit the go-ahead short jumper with 12.4 seconds to play to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a come-back victory over Indiana. Roy Hibbert missed a difficult jumper off a broken play as time expired to end the Lakers' third win in 10 games.

Bryant scored nine points in the final 2:32 while the Lakers rallied past the Pacers, who blew a 13-point lead in the second half.

MAVERICKS 109, CAVALLIERS 90

CLEVELAND (AP) — Monta Ellis scored 20 points, Dirk Nowitzki added 15 and the Dallas Mavericks won their fifth straight game Sunday, a 109-90 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

LeBron James, who is out with knee and back soreness, missed his fourth in a row and fifth of the season. The Cavaliers are 1-4 when the four-time MVP doesn't play and have dropped 5 of 7 overall.

Kevin Love scored a season-high 30 points, but the Cavaliers couldn't stay with the Mavericks.

Kyrie Irving left in the third quarter with lower back tightness and didn't return. He was 2 of 9 from the field and scored a season-low six points.

HEAT 88, NETS 84

MIAMI (AP) — Chris Bosh scored 26 points, Dwyane Wade scored 10 of his 25 points in the final minutes and the Heat held off Brooklyn to snap a four-game losing streak.

Hassan Whiteside had 11 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks off the bench for Miami, which won for only the seventh time in 19 home games.

Joe Johnson scored 19, Brook Lopez added 16 and Mirza Teletovic had 14 for Brooklyn, which had won six of seven and was seeking to get back over .500 for the first time since Nov. 12.

PISTONS 114, KINGS 95

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (AP) — Brandon Jennings scored 35 points as the Pistons beat the Kings for their



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant dunks during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

fifth straight win.

Andre Drummond had 15 points and 14 rebounds and Greg Monroe had 14 points 11 rebounds for Detroit, which improved to 5-0 since Josh Smith was released in December. Detroit is 10-23. DeMarcus Cousins led the Kings with 18 points and 15 rebounds. SUNS 125, RAPTORS 109

PHOENIX (AP) — Eric Bledsoe scored 20 points, fellow guards Goran Dragic and Isaiah Thomas added 18 apiece and the Suns handed the Raptors their second straight blowout loss.

Seven Suns hit double figures in the team's highest-scoring non-overtime game this season. The Raptors, who trailed by as many as 19 points in the first half and 27 in the second, finished a season-long six-game road trip with their two most one-sided losses of the season. Jonas Valanciunas scored 21 and Kyle Lowry 19 for the Raptors. Lou Williams and James Johnson added 17 apiece.

Phoenix won for the eighth time in 10 games.

BUCKS 95 KNICKS 82

NEW YORK (AP) — Zaza Pachulia had 16 points

and 14 rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks handed the New York Knicks their 11th

straight loss.

Tim Hardaway, Jr. had 17 points for the Knicks (5-31),

who lost a franchise-record 10th straight home game.

□

Alex Ovechkin has goal and assist as Caps win

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin had a goal and an assist to help the Washington Capitals beat the Florida Panthers 4-3 on Sunday.

Brooks Laich and Karl Alzner added second-period goals for Washington, which has won 10 straight home games against the Panthers.

The Capitals improved to 10-1-3 in their past 14 games, and avoided a let-down after their 3-2 victory over Chicago in the Winter Classic.

Braden Holtby made 29 saves for Washington.

Nick Bjugstad had a goal and an assist for Florida. Vincent Trochek and Dylan Olsen also scored.

HURRICANES 2, BRUINS 1, SO

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Eric Staal scored the only goal



Carolina Hurricanes' Jay McClement (18) gets tied up by Boston Bruins' Adam McQuaid (54) battling for the puck in front of Bruins' goalie Tuukka Rask (40) of Finland, during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Raleigh, N.C., Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015.

Associated Press

in the shootout to lift Carolina past Boston.

Anton Khudobin got the start in goal for Carolina in place of Cam Ward, who played the previous four games. Khudobin, a former Bruin, made 19 saves and stopped Reilly Smith, Patrice Bergeron and Torey Krug in the shootout. Tuuk-

ka Rask made 35 saves for Boston, but couldn't stop Staal.

Patrick Dwyer opened the scoring for Carolina with 33.2 seconds left in the first period. Bergeron tied it for Boston, one-timing a pass from Brad Marchand past Khudobin in the second period. □

In Las Vegas books, college football title game is a big hit

By **TIM DAHLBERG**

AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) -- College football fans and ESPN executives aren't the only ones applauding the new championship playoffs. Bettors and bookies seem to like it a lot, too.

The semifinal games on New Year's Day drew smash box office business in Nevada's legal sports books. And the title game Monday night between Ohio State and Oregon will follow a weekend of NFL playoff games that could be one of the most heavily bet ever.

Like Ohio State as a 6 1/2-point underdog or think Oregon will cover as a big favorite once again? Get in line and bring plenty of cash.

"It's been a very, very good football season," said Jimmy Vaccaro of the South Point sports book. "The interest is through the roof."

That was true even before the four teams in the playoff were announced in a football season that has been beyond good in this gambling town. Sports books took in record amounts every month on football, including more than \$400 million in November alone. Much of that was bet on the NFL, but college football got its share of the action, too. And while Monday's title game probably



Oregon quarterback Marcus Mariota warms up before the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal against Florida State, Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015 in Pasadena, Calif.

Associated Press

won't match the action on a Dallas-Green Bay match-up the day before that has bookmakers salivating, it won't be too far behind.

"It will be a super busy weekend," said Nick Bogdanovich, oddsmaker for the chain of William Hill U.S. sports books. "And we just came off a six-day run of nonstop action that was huge on football."

Included in that run were the Jan. 1 semifinals that some bookmakers say were the most heavily bet bowl games ever. Bettors had their way by picking Oregon in the Rose Bowl, but

bookies more than made up any losses by scoring big on Ohio State's upset of Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. How the books make out on the title game remains to be played out. But in the only state where full sports betting is legal, football is on an unprecedented roll. Figures compiled by the Nevada Gaming Control Board show records set in September, October and November for football betting. In the first three months of the football season, more than \$1.1 billion was wagered on the games in Nevada's 186 sports books, with bookies keeping about

\$82 million of that in profits. "This year the handle has simply been ridiculous," Bogdanovich said. "People want sports betting, that's pretty clear. And we want to give them as much as humanly possible to bet on." For the national title game that includes the usual lines and totals plus some proposition bets for things like first team to score or even which team wins the coin toss. It's not exactly at Super Bowl levels, but should rival at least the action on one of Saturday's NFL playoff games. The smorgasbord of options brings people clutch-

ing handfuls of 20 dollar bills to the betting windows, where it is cash only. But many in the industry believe it's also part of a change in attitude, as evidenced recently by NBA commissioner Adam Silver's embrace of the concept of sports betting.

"The walls are crumbling. It's a different era, a different time," said Vaccaro, who has been posting lines in Las Vegas since the 1970s. "People are starting to understand it's a huge entertainment value and it's not wrong to be on the Dallas Cowboys with 40 or 50 bucks. You just end up rooting twice as hard for the team you have money on."

And sometimes you even win. While this has been a profitable year for sports books, the margins in the business are fairly thin. In 2013, bookmakers won just 5.6 percent of the \$3.6 billion wagered legally in Nevada, though 2014 figures to be more profitable when the figures are tallied up.

"The results have favored the bookmaker for sure, but these things go in cycles," Bogdanovich said. "There may be years when the players do better than the books. So when you get a year like this you count your blessings and hope things are even better next year."



France's Richard Gasquet returns the ball to Spain's Pablo Andujar during the Qatar ATP Open Tennis tournament in Doha, Qatar, Monday, Jan. 5, 2015.

Associated Press.

SANDRA HARWITT

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Ivo

Karlovic served his 9,000th career ace Monday in beating Lukas Rosol 7-6 (4),

Karlovic serves up 9,000th ace in win at Qatar Open

6-3 in the first round of the Qatar Open.

The 35-year-old Croat joins retired players Goran Ivanisevic and Andy Roddick as the only three men to serve at least 9,000 aces in their careers.

"Now I'm in the club," Karlovic said. "It's definitely one of my goals to be No. 1 in all aces. This year, maybe, I will do it."

Ivanisevic holds the record with 10,183 aces. Roddick, the former top-ranked American, trails with 9,074.

Karlovic had 27 aces Monday to take his tally to 9,022. Needing five aces to reach the milestone, Karlovic only needed two service games to get there. He hit two aces in his first service game, then dug out of a 0-40 hole in his second.

In 2014, Karlovic put up a tour-leading 1,185 aces for the season. Earlier, sixth-seeded Richard Gasquet advanced to the second round by beating Pablo Andujar of Spain 6-3, 7-5.

Gasquet, the highest-seeded player playing on the opening day, led 4-2 in both sets but dropped serve at 5-4 in the second set. The Frenchman closed out the match with a backhand crosscourt winner.

Dustin Brown of Germany, Simone Bolelli of Italy, Fernando Verdasco of Spain and Ivan Dodig of Croatia also advanced to the second round.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal enter play on Tuesday.

Raise your home's IQ: smart gadgets take center stage at CES

ANICK JESDANUN

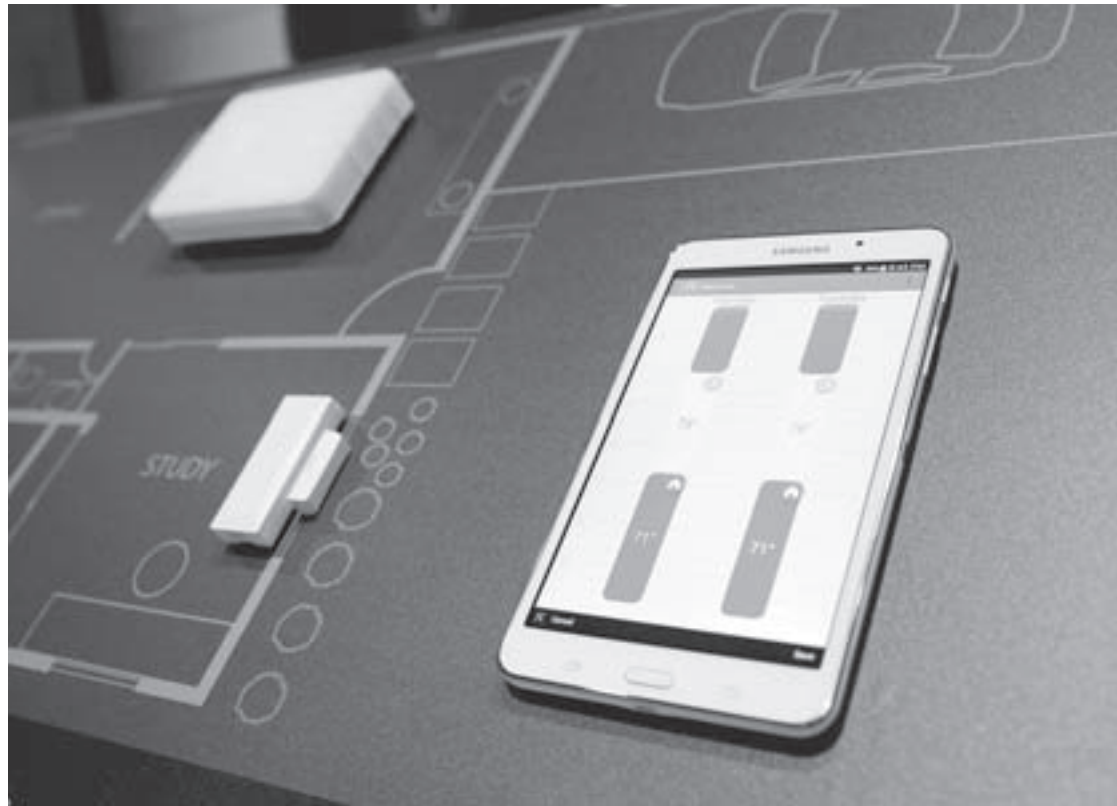
AP Technology Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Imagine a world in which your garage door opens automatically as you pull into the driveway. The living room lights and heater turn on — perhaps the oven starts warming up, too. In the so-called “smart home,” cars, appliances and other devices all have sensors and Internet connectivity to think and act for themselves, and make your life easier.

We're not there just yet, but we're getting closer. The smart-home concept is known in tech circles as the Internet of Things. Current iterations primarily include our ability to control gadgets such as lights and security alarms or view data remotely through a smartphone app. At the International CES gadget show in Las Vegas this week, manufacturers will promote more devices and functionality. Some gadgets will be able to talk directly with one another, not just to an app. The four-day show opens to the public Tuesday.

The Internet of Things could mean big business for gadget makers. The Consumer Electronics Association projects U.S. sales of smart energy and security systems alone will total \$574 million this year, a 23 percent increase from 2014. Although that pales by comparison to the \$18 billion spent on TVs and displays, growth has been swift. In terms of people smartening up their homes in earnest, though, it will probably be another two years before devices are cheap and widespread enough for the typical consumer, says Eduardo Pinheiro, CEO of Muzzley, which makes a hub that allows devices to talk to each other.

For now, the smart home is more about possibilities than practice. Many companies exhibiting at CES are laying the foundation for what a smart-home system will eventually do, hoping to entice consumers to start thinking about upgrading to smart gad-



The Alarm.com smart thermostat and application are on display at CES Unveiled, a media preview event for CES International, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, in Las Vegas. Associated Press

gets. It's not always an easy sell.

Consider wearable devices that track fitness and other activities. In many cases, the novelty wears off quickly, and devices end up in drawers. But what if a wearable device that tracks sleep could tell the coffeemaker to start brewing as soon as you awoke? When the coffee's done, what if the sprinklers on the front lawn automatically turned off so you didn't get wet walking out the front door to work?

For example, Lucis Technologies will soon ship a smart-lighting device called NuBryte that can learn your behavior, such as what time you tend to come home. Sensors can turn on the night light if you wake up to use the bathroom but switch on brighter lights during the day. A coffeemaker from Smarter will soon use data from fitness trackers such as Fitbit. If you had a bad night of sleep, the coffeemaker will know to make the java stronger that morning. Other products focus on better notifications: a battery for a smoke detector to alert you on your phone when the alarm goes off, or a bracelet that vibrates when the baby cries in its crib. (Moms rejoice: the bracelet is even smart enough to alternate which

parent it alerts to get up.) “It's got to be something people are seeing it can do and want it to do,” says Chris Penrose, AT&T's senior

At CES, Whirlpool will showcase dryers that can run at a slower, energy-saving cycle if you aren't home and thus aren't in a rush.



BeeWi wirelessly controlled lights are on display at CES Unveiled, a media preview event for CES International, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, in Las Vegas.

vice president for the Internet of Things. “It's got to make their lives better and be incredibly easy to use.” “True consumer value will come when devices work in concert with one another and in many cases across manufacturers,” adds Brett Dibkey, a Whirlpool Corp. vice president. “The home adapts to the way consumers live rather than the other way around.”

The dryer integrates with Google Inc.'s Nest smart thermostat, which has sensors to figure out that no one's home and then lowers the heat automatically. Meanwhile, a smart-home hub called DigitalStrom plans to take cues from Nest. If Nest is trying to cool down the house, for instance, DigitalStrom will lower automated window shades to block out sunlight.

These are the building blocks for an eventual automated home. Once those building blocks are in place, services can better predict what you want. For example, Netflix is already good about recommending movies to watch based on your preferences, but it might suggest something different if it could read data from a wearable device or camera and tell that you're with friends, or stressed out, says Shawn Dubravac, senior director of research with the Consumer Electronics Association.

As we get closer to being able to live like the Jetsons, manufacturers will have to convince consumers that the technology is secure from hackers — and that convenience and peace of mind are worth any risks. Ann Poletti, who now uses the Nest thermostat at her home in San Francisco, said her first apartment

burned down, so she is sensitive to making sure all her appliances are off. The Internet of Things would let her check remotely. “Toothbrushes and ironing boards, one day it will all be connected. I think that's great,” says Poletti. “Some people don't want all the data out there. I'm worried about access to my bank account, less so about whether my heat is going on or off.” □

Associated Press

Oil's plunge continues, dipping below \$50 a barrel

CLIFFORD KRAUSS

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HOUSTON - Oil prices tumbled below \$50 a barrel Monday, spooking global financial markets and signaling that the remarkable 50 percent price drop since June was continuing this year and even quickening.

The new drop in U.S. and global benchmarks of more than 4 percent was accompanied by a series of reports of increased

Middle Eastern oil exports; continuing increases in U.S. production despite planned exploration cutbacks by many oil companies; and renewed worries about the declining economic fortunes of Europe. West Texas Intermediate crude dipped below \$50 a barrel briefly Monday before recovering a bit. Brent crude, the global benchmark, fell to about \$53 a barrel.

The shakiness of the oil

market caused tremors in stock markets as well. In early afternoon, the Standard & Poor's 500 index was off 1.7 percent, and the fall in the Dow Jones industrial average exceeded 300 points at times. European markets, buffeted by a declining euro as well, were hit even harder, with the EuroStoxx 50 ending 3.7 percent lower.

"It is a very shaky start for the oil market," said Tom

Kloza, global head of energy analysis for Oil Price Information Service. "The norm is a lot of money comes into commodity index funds at the beginning of the year, and that can create a market rally. Today, instead of new money coming into oil, you got some more old money going out of oil."

The drop in prices has led to a rising tide of oil company announcements in recent days of investment cuts

for the coming months. Ensign Energy Services, a Canadian drilling contractor, reported that it would be laying off 700 workers, or roughly 10 percent of its workforce, in California fields. Several Texas-based companies that have borrowed heavily in recent years to produce in new Texas and North Dakota shale fields are expected to announce steep investment and job cuts in the coming days. □

Markets plunge on energy stocks and Greece woes

STEVE ROTHWELL

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The ongoing slump in the price of oil is starting to become a headache for the stock market.

On Monday, oil plunged, dipping below \$50 for the first time in more than five years. The sharp drop prompted a big sell-off, not just in the energy sector, but across the entire stock market.

Stocks had already endured a weak open amid concerns that Greece could exit the euro, adding to worries about the poor outlook for growth in that region. As oil continued to slide, the losses deepened and the Standard & Poor's 500 index ended the day with its biggest loss in three months.

The price of oil has been falling since last summer amid mounting evidence that the world is oversupplied with the commodity after a surge in U.S. production. After six months of falling prices, investors are now getting jittery that the slump is attributable to more than just the supply glut; it could also be signaling a weakening global economy.

"The lower that oil prices go, the more it reinforces into the market's mind that perhaps this is more of a demand issue than a supply issue," said Burt White, Chief Investment Officer at LPL Financial. That raises questions "about the robustness of this recovery." The S&P 500 index dropped

37.62 points, or 1.8 percent, to 2,020.58. That was the biggest one-day slump for the index since Oct. 9. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 331.34 points, or 1.9 percent, to 17,501.65. The Nasdaq composite fell 74.24 points, or 1.6 percent.

gas prices also put more money in the pockets of consumers.

But there are downsides as well. As the price of oil slumps, some companies in the energy industry will go out of business. Not only will that cost jobs in the sector,

pact that it would have on global growth. Now, they also have to contend with renewed speculation that Greece may exit the euro. European stock markets slumped and the euro plunged against the dollar on reports that Ger-

as the region's economy struggles.

On Monday, the currency was trading at \$1.1939 after falling to a five-year low of \$1.1862.

The outlook for economic growth in Europe and other regions matters to companies in the U.S., as nearly half the sales from S&P 500 companies are generated outside of the U.S.

"Our companies do a lot of business with Europe, we sell a lot of goods and services there," said Scott Wren, senior global equity strategist at the Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "Anything that hurts consumer confidence and business in Europe is going to hurt economic growth."

In U.S. government bond trading, prices rose as investors moved to buy the safest assets. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which falls when prices rise, dropped to 2.04 percent.

Despite the increase in volatility, analysts are still confident in the outlook for growth in the U.S. and believe that the stock market will hand investors positive returns this year. Some even recommend adding to stock holdings when prices fall.

Just one week ago, the S&P 500 index closed at an all-time high of 2,090.57. The energy sector aside, company earnings should remain strong, and the economy is still growing. Last quarter the U.S. economy expanded at an annual rate of 5 percent. □



Trader Edward Schreier, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Monday, Jan. 5, 2015. US stocks closed lower Monday, led by declines in energy stocks as the price of oil plunged again.
(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Energy stocks led the drop, plunging 4 percent, as the price of oil closed down \$2.65 at \$50.04 a barrel, after dipping below \$50 during trading. But the declines were broad, and even airline stocks, usually a beneficiary of lower oil prices, ended the day lower.

Most analysts and economists say that, on balance, a decline in oil prices is a boon for the broader economy because it reduces energy costs for industrial companies. Lower

but it will also cut spending on things like plants and equipment.

Transocean, a company that provides offshore drilling services to oil companies, was among the biggest decliners in the S&P 500 index on Monday. The company's stock slumped \$1.28, or 7.1 percent, to \$16.84.

Another area for concern is Europe.

Investors were already worried about the poor growth prospects in the euro region, and the im-

man Chancellor Angela Merkel no longer believes it would be too risky for the 19-member eurozone if Greece dropped out of the currency bloc. Elections in Greece this month could be won by the Syriza party, which wants to renegotiate the terms of the country's international bailout, threatening its place in the euro group.

The euro currency was already under pressure from expectations that the European Central Bank will expand its monetary stimulus

Twin Peaks Planet



PAUL KRUGMAN

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In 2014, soaring inequality in advanced nations finally received the attention it deserved, as Thomas Piketty's "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" became a surprise (and deserving) best-seller. The usual suspects are still in well-paid denial, but, to everyone else, it is now obvious that income and wealth are more concentrated at the very top than they have been since the Gilded Age - and the trend shows no sign of letting up.

But that's a story about developments within nations, and, therefore, incomplete. You really want to supplement Piketty-style analysis with a global view, and when you do, I'd argue, you get a better sense of the good, the bad and the potentially very ugly of the world we live in.

So let me suggest that you look at a remarkable chart of income gains around the world produced by Branko Milanovic of the City University of New York Graduate Center (which I will be joining this summer). What Milanovic shows is that income growth since the fall of the Berlin Wall has been a "twin peaks" story. Incomes have, of course, soared at the top, as the world's elite becomes ever richer. But there have also been huge gains for what we might call the global middle - largely consisting of the rising middle classes of China and India.

And let's be clear: Income growth in emerging nations has produced huge gains in human welfare, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of desperate poverty and giving them a chance for a better life.

Now for the bad news: Between these twin peaks - the ever-richer global elite and the rising Chinese middle class - lies what we might call the valley of despond: Incomes have grown slowly, if at all, for people around the 20th percentile of the world income distribution. Who are these people? Basically, the advanced-country working classes. And although Milanovic's data only go up through 2008, we can be sure that this group has done even worse since then, racked by the effects of high unemployment, stagnating wages, and austerity policies.

Furthermore, the travails of workers in rich countries are, in important ways, the flip side of the gains above and below them. Compe-

tition from emerging-economy exports has surely been a factor depressing wages in wealthier nations, although probably not the dominant force. More important, soaring incomes at the top were achieved, in large part, by squeezing those below: by cutting wages, slashing benefits, crushing unions, and diverting a rising share of national resources to financial wheeling and dealing.

Perhaps more important still, the wealthy exert a vastly disproportionate effect on policy. And elite priorities - obsessive concern with budget deficits, with the supposed need to slash social programs - have done a lot to deepen the valley of despond. So who speaks for those left behind in this twin-peaked world? You might have expected conventional parties of the left to take a populist stance on behalf of their domestic working classes. But mostly what you get instead - from leaders ranging from François Hollande of France to Ed Miliband of Britain to, yes, Barack Obama - is awkward mumbling. (Obama has, in fact, done a lot to help working Americans, but he's remarkably bad at making his own case.)

The problem with these conventional leaders, I'd argue, is that they're afraid to challenge elite priorities, in particular the obsession with budget deficits, for fear of being considered irresponsible. And that leaves the field open for unconventional leaders - some of them seriously scary - who are willing to address the anger and despair of ordinary citizens.

The Greek leftists who may well come to power there later this month are arguably the least scary of the bunch, although their demands for debt relief and an end to austerity may provoke a tense standoff with Brussels. Elsewhere, however, we see the rise of nationalist, anti-immigrant parties like France's National Front and the U.K. Independence Party in Britain - and there are even worse people waiting in the wings.

All of this suggests some uncomfortable historical analogies. Remember, this is the second time we've had a global financial crisis followed by a prolonged worldwide slump. Then, as now, any effective response to the crisis was blocked by elite demands for balanced budgets and stable currencies. And the eventual result was to deliver power into the hands of people who were, shall we say, not very nice.

I'm not suggesting that we're on the verge of fully replaying the 1930s. But I would argue that political and opinion leaders need to face up to the reality that our current global setup isn't working for everyone. It's great for the elite and has done a lot of good for emerging nations, but that valley of despond is very real. And bad things will happen if we don't do something about it. □



Silicon Valley's Mirror Effect



JOE NOCERA

© 2014 New York Times

"If meritocracy exists anywhere on earth, it is in Silicon Valley," wrote David Sacks in an email to The Times' Jodi Kantor.

Kantor was working on an article, published in The Times on Tuesday, about the Stanford class of 1994 - the class that graduated a year before Netscape went public, and, for all intents and purposes, started the Internet economy. She was exploring why the men in that class had done so much better in Silicon Valley than the women.

Sacks, meanwhile, was one of the most successful members of the class. At Stanford he wrote for The Stanford Review, "a conservative-libertarian campus newspaper," where he befriended Peter Thiel, a fellow libertarian. Then, in 1998, Sacks, Thiel and a handful of others - overwhelmingly white and male - founded PayPal, which made them all very rich. Since then, the PayPal Mafia, as these men are known in Silicon Valley, have seeded companies, founded companies and sold companies - in effect, financing another generation of (mostly) young white men.

In the email, which Kantor posted on her Facebook page, Sacks described meritocracy as one of his "core values," and noted that when he has hired and promoted women, it was because they were the top candidates. "I

chose the best person for the job. I needed the best talent to win, and I wanted to foster a culture of excellence."

Well, maybe. But, as Kantor pointedly asks in a short introduction to Sacks' email, if Silicon Valley is truly a meritocracy, "why do mostly men prevail?"

This is a question that has become increasingly urgent. This summer, Jesse Jackson shamed a number of important Silicon Valley companies, including Google, Facebook, Apple and LinkedIn, into publishing a breakdown of their employees by race and sex. The numbers are appalling - something the companies were forced to concede once the figures became public. At LinkedIn, 2 percent of the workforce is black, and 4 percent is Hispanic. Google is 70 percent male, with 91 percent of its employees either white or Asian. Facebook: 69 percent male and 91 percent white or Asian. When it comes to leadership positions or board seats, the numbers are even worse. Can this really be the result of "meritocracy?"

There aren't many women or African-Americans working in Silicon Valley who would agree. "Silicon Valley's obsession with meritocracy is delusional," Freeda Kapor Klein, the co-chair of the Kapor Center for Social Impact, told The Los Angeles Times in May. "Unless someone wants to posit that intelligence is not evenly distributed across genders and race, there has to be some systemic explanation for what these numbers look like." Her husband, Mitch Kapor, designed Lotus 1-2-3, the seminal spreadsheet program that helped to make the IBM PC famous, and he calls the reality of Silicon Valley's hiring practices a "mirror-tocracy."

In its December issue, Fast Company published two articles about being black in Silicon Valley that included a round-table discussion with a handful of African-American tech leaders. They talked partly about the cultural reasons that African-Americans

have been underrepresented: It can be hard to take a big financial risk when you don't have a safety net - like parents or friends with money - to fall back on if you fail. They note that so often, Silicon Valley executives only want to hire people who have graduated from certain schools, like Stanford or Harvard. Very few recruit from Clemson, even though, as Nicole Sanchez, a diversity consultant, told me, "Clemson graduates the most black computer science graduate students in the country."

But what shines through most is the extent to which people in Silicon Valley exhibit "unconscious bias." "The meritocratic glow of Silicon Valley is so frustrating," said Kanyi Maqubela, a partner at The Collaborative Fund, during the Fast Company round table. "It creates a pass for people who use things like the 'culture filter'" - such as sharing the same interests as others at the company. "What's the culture filter?" he continued. "An easy excuse to be prejudiced."

Fundamentally, people who create companies, with the attendant intensity and pressure, want to be around people like themselves. They tend to be more forgiving of those like themselves, too. One man Kantor mentions in her article - and several women mentioned to me when I was researching this column - is Keith Rabois. Another member of the PayPal Mafia, Rabois left his job at Square in January 2013 after sexual harassment allegations - which Rabois denied - were made by a former lover who also worked at the company. Within one month, Rabois had joined a venture capital firm. If a woman or an African-American had faced the same type of charges, would she or he have rebounded as quickly? It's doubtful.

It is easy to understand the appeal of going into business with your friends - and then surrounding yourself with mirror images of yourself. But let's at least not call it a meritocracy. □

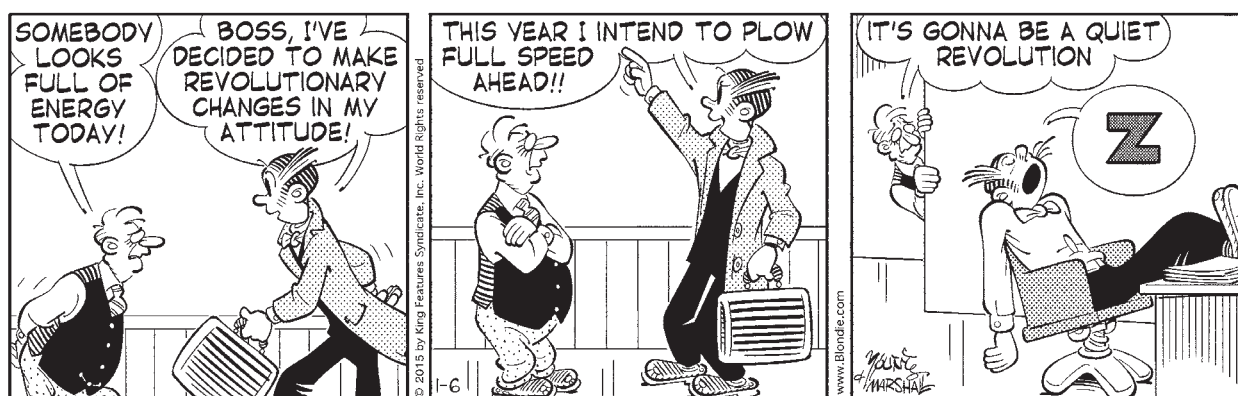
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6 Chix



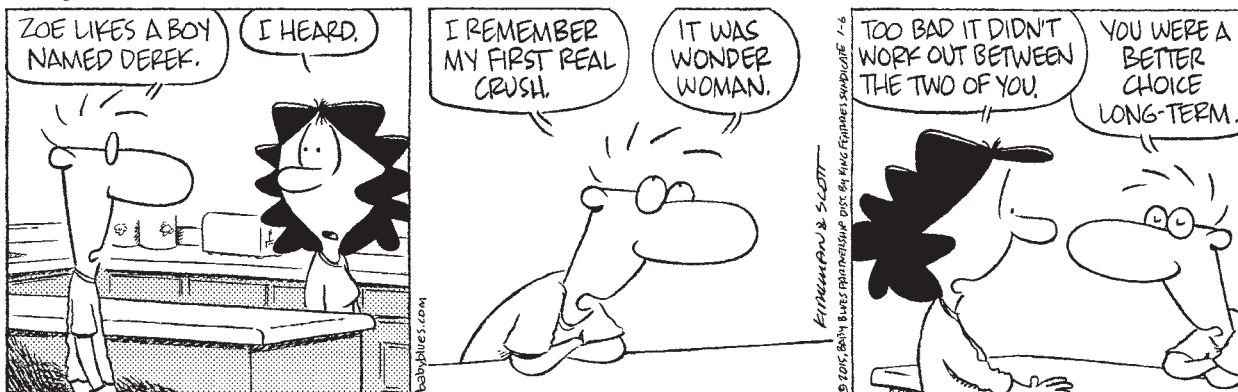
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Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	7		2		1			
8		3						
	5			3	8			
9				5		6		4
		2				8		
1	6		4					3
			4	6			5	
			1		7		9	

Difficulty Level ★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

7	3	9	6	1	5	2	8	4
2	6	4	7	3	8	9	5	1
1	8	5	9	4	2	3	6	7
9	4	3	8	2	1	5	7	6
8	5	1	3	6	7	4	9	2
6	2	7	4	5	9	1	3	8
3	9	2	1	8	6	7	4	5
4	1	8	5	7	3	6	2	9
5	7	6	2	9	4	8	1	3

ACROSS

- 1 Go to __; retire for the night
- 4 Burn with liquid
- 9 Close relative
- 13 Test
- 15 Bicker
- 16 Unicorn's feature
- 17 Actress Tierney
- 18 Women's dress shoes
- 19 Had debts
- 20 "Beat it!"
- 22 Dobbin's dinner
- 23 Spanish bull
- 24 Pelosi's title: abbr.
- 26 Spit
- 29 Loyal citizens
- 34 Thick string
- 35 Shelter of tree boughs
- 36 Which person?
- 37 Sounded a bell
- 38 Used an emery board
- 39 Messy person
- 40 "Roses __ red, violets..."
- 41 Actress Sally
- 42 Honking birds
- 43 Street vendors
- 45 Wobble
- 46 Baseball score
- 47 __ up; absorb
- 48 " __ girl!"; new parents' cry
- 51 Difference; lack of equality
- 56 Kitchen or den
- 57 Indians of Peru
- 58 Lunchtime
- 60 Like water __ duck's back
- 61 Begin
- 62 Very excited
- 63 Wacko
- 64 Comfortable; familiar
- 65 24-hour period

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13			14		15					16			
17					18					19			
	20			21						22			
			23				24	25					
26	27	28				29	30			31	32	33	
34					35					36			
37					38					39			
40				41						42			
43			44					45					
			46				47						
48	49	50			51	52	53				54	55	
56					57					58		59	
60					61					62			
63					64					65			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

1/6/15

Monday's Puzzle Solved

GLOSS	SLAM	PASS
RIFLE	LUGE	RUTH
AFFIX	IRON	ODOR
MEANTIME	ASPIRE	
GENE	SCOOTED	
SIESTA	POEMS	
NOV	SNEER	EAGER
UTAH	EXCEL	LUAU
BASIC	PARIS	SRS
GLEAM	CASTLE	
ASPHALT	GIVE	
RWANDA	UNTANGLE	
DICE	PAPA	GOOEY
ONES	SPOT	ERASE
REDS	ERRS	SALTS

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1/6/15

DOWN

- 1 Panhandle
- 2 Former spouses
- 3 Unpleasantly cold and wet
- 4 Desert in Africa
- 5 Statement of religious beliefs
- 6 Over the hill
- 7 Brief period of no activity
- 8 Abandoned
- 9 Ms. Goldberg
- 10 Des Moines, __
- 11 Worry
- 12 Wraps up
- 14 Conference
- 21 Bird of peace
- 25 Go astray
- 26 Part of a purse, usually
- 27 Savvy
- 28 __ up; formed a queue
- 29 Voting place
- 30 Floored
- 31 Small hooter
- 32 "Good things come to __ who wait"
- 33 Not smashed
- 35 Coffin platform
- 38 Wicked; cruel
- 39 Looking for

- 41 Respiratory bug, for short
- 42 Equipment
- 44 Plays
- 45 Comfortably warm
- 47 Tire in the trunk
- 48 Common metal
- 49 Bean curd
- 50 __ drinks; soda pops
- 52 Bump __; meet unexpectedly
- 53 Fraud
- 54 Warty creature
- 55 Meditative exercise
- 59 Negative vote

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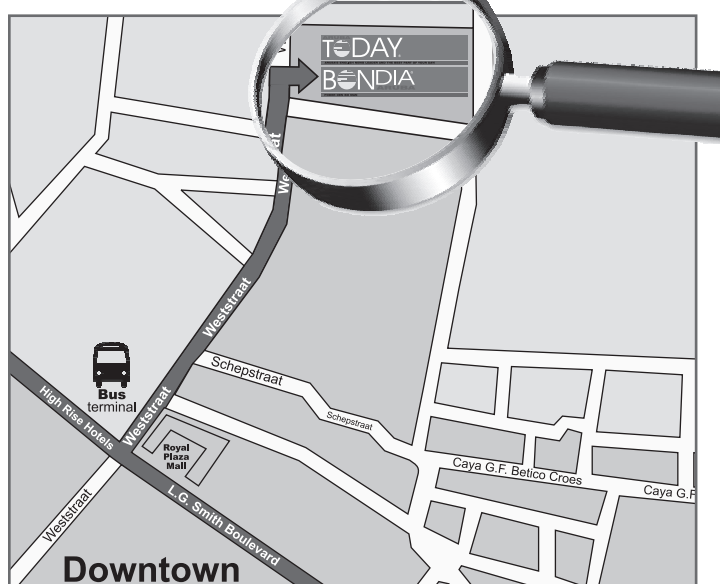
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NASA explores inflatable spacecraft technology

BROCK VERGAKIS
Associated Press

NORFOLK, Virginia (AP) —

Devising a way to one day land astronauts on Mars is a complex problem and NASA scientists think something as simple as a child's toy design may help solve the problem. Safely landing a large spacecraft on the Red Planet is just one of many engineering challenges the agency faces as it eyes an ambitious goal of sending humans into deep space later this century.

At NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, engineers have been working to develop an inflatable heat shield that looks a lot like a super-sized version of a stacking ring of doughnuts that infants play with. The engineers believe a lightweight, inflatable heat shield could be deployed to slow the craft to enter a Martian atmosphere much thinner than Earth's.

Such an inflatable heat shield could help a spacecraft reach the high-altitude southern plains of Mars and other areas that would otherwise be inaccessible under existing technology. The experts note that rockets alone can't be used to land a large craft on Mars as can be done on the atmosphereless moon. Parachutes also won't work for a large spacecraft needed to send humans to Mars, they add.

Hence the inflatable rings. The rings would be filled with nitrogen and covered with a thermal blanket. Once deployed for landing, the rings would sit atop the spacecraft, somewhat resembling a giant mushroom.

"We try to not use propulsion if we don't have to,"



This May 14, 2012 photo provided by NASA Langley shows the inflatable structure of a Hypersonic Inflatable Aerodynamic Decelerator, background, made up of high-tech fabric rings, similar to those seen in the foreground, at NASA Langley research center in Hampton, Va.

Associated Press

said Neil Cheatwood, the senior engineer at Langley for advanced entry, descent and landing systems. "We make use of that atmosphere as much as we can, because it means we don't have to carry all that fuel with us."

NASA's leaders acknowledge that getting humans safely to and from Mars as early as the 2030s will pose extreme challenges. The agency's scientists acknowledge they also must design new in-space propulsion systems, advanced spacesuits, long-term living habitats aboard spacecraft — even communication systems for deep space.

Work is proceeding, sometimes fitfully.

When an unmanned private rocket destined for the International Space Station exploded in October soon after liftoff from Wallops Island, Virginia, numerous

scientific experiments went up in flames with it. But one NASA experiment that Orbital Sciences Corp. originally invited aboard — for a second-generation inflatable spacecraft — never made it for lack of time to get it together, NASA officials say.

That experiment calls for testing how second-generation inflatable spacecraft technology performs upon re-entry in Earth's atmosphere. The test is important because NASA officials believe an inflatable heat shield could be what helps them land astronauts on Mars and return larger loads of supplies from the International Space Station. The experiment is now scheduled to go up on the next Antares rocket in 2016. New technology is needed to get astronauts to Mars because the type of spacecraft that would land humans would be

much larger than anything that's landed on the planet previously. Current heat shield technology weighs too much to be on larger spacecraft, which means scientists can't land anything much larger than the rovers that have been sent there previously. NASA has relied on parachute-based deceleration on Mars since the Viking program in the 1970s.

Engineers at Langley have been working on the inflatable technology for about a decade, and believe it is close to being ready for operational use. "If I had the budget and we had the funding to do it, I think we could get as large a scale as needed for humans in five to ten years," Cheatwood said.

He said the same inflatable technology could also be used for spacecraft to explore other planets or objects with atmospheres,

such as Venus, Jupiter and Titan, Saturn's largest moon.

Because the inflatables are made of lightweight material and filled with nitrogen, more room is left aboard a spacecraft for science experiments and other things astronauts will need. The inflatable is covered by a thermal blanket of layers of heat-resistant materials.

"The idea is that you would have something that could be packed up, put in a very small volume and then deployed into a very large size," Anthony Calomino, principal investigator for materials and structures for hypersonic re-entry at Langley.

He said in a statement in April: "Think airbag, something we could pack into compressed volume that will fit the size limits of a launch shroud, but allow for a much larger aeroshell."

Smaller scale, inflatable experiments have been launched on rockets before, but never into orbit. That work was recently part of a NASA review in October. The information gathered from those earlier projects will be applied to the upcoming, larger-scale experiment in 2016.

It still won't be large enough to protect a spacecraft carrying astronauts, but NASA scientists believe the technology is sound.

"When you first tell people you're going to do an ... inflatable spacecraft, they have in their minds something really floppy like a jellyfish and it's really not that way," Cheatwood said. "They're very durable ... This is a technology that I think is ready to use, whether it's for humans in 20 years on Mars or whether it's a large robotic mission sooner than that."



In this May 14, 1985 file photo, New York Mayor Edward Koch, left, poses with former Miss America Bess Myerson in New York.

Associated Press

Bess Myerson, the 1st Jewish Miss America, dies at 90

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Bess Myerson, the first Jewish Miss America and a New York political force until a series of scandals dubbed the "Bess Mess" forced her into obscurity, has died. She was 90.

Myerson died Dec. 14 at her home in Santa Monica, California, according to the Los Angeles coroner's office and Department of Public Health Vital Records Office. Her death was first reported by The New York Times.

The Bronx-born Myerson was hailed as a Jewish, feminist Jackie Robinson - a groundbreaker for her religion and sex - after parlaying her stunning 1945 Miss America victory into national celebrity.

The 5-foot-10 dark-haired beauty, unlike her predecessors, accentuated her intelligence. Myerson landed a series of television jobs, from game show hostess to on-air reporter, before her appointment as New York City's chief consumer watchdog in 1969.

The popular Myerson helped Ed Koch win the 1977 mayoral race, deflecting rumors of the bachelor candidate's homosexuality with her constant presence at his side. "The immaculate deception," cynics

called it after the couple shared an election night victory kiss.

She made her own bid for office in 1980: an unsuccessful Democratic primary run for U.S. Senate. Three years later, Koch appointed her Cultural Affairs commissioner - an \$83,000-a-year post as the city's liaison to the arts.

"People like to read about me," she said in a 1987 interview. "They like to imagine themselves in my life." But Myerson's carefully cultivated image crumbled in the mid-1980s under a barrage of political and personal embarrassments that became known as the Bess Mess.

A city background check exposed Myerson as an insanely jealous woman who harassed an ex-boyfriend and his new lover. She repeatedly invoked her right against self-incrimination in a 1986 corruption probe of a subsequent boyfriend, Carl "Andy" Capasso, who was born the year Myerson was crowned.

Capasso, a contractor with purported mob ties, pleaded guilty to nine counts of tax evasion.

Myerson, Capasso and Judge Hortense Gabel were indicted in October 1987 on a charge of conspiring to fix Capasso's divorce case.

Taraji P. Henson as Cookie at heart of TV's 'Empire'

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Taraji P. Henson is driving down an LA street, chatting on her cellphone, when a billboard catches her eye.

"Hi, me! Hiiii!" she says, smiling at her latest on-screen incarnation: glamorous ex-con Cookie in "Empire," which premieres on Fox at 9 p.m. EST Wednesday.

Draped in fabulous furs and drenched in attitude, Henson's Cookie is the heart of the Fox drama, a fiercely devoted mother and astute businesswoman who is fearless when it comes to getting what she wants. Her sometimes-reluctant partner is Lucious Lyon (Terrence Howard), a music mogul deciding which of their three sons should run the family's entertainment empire.

Henson has seen her face on billboards before, with dozens of film credits (including 2008's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," for which she earned a supporting actress Oscar nod) and popular TV series such as "Person of Interest" to her name.

"Sometimes I forget, you know what I mean?" she says. "I just go on about my day, and look up and go, 'That's right, I do have a TV show coming out!'"

The 44-year-old actress



In this July 20, 2014 file photo, Taraji P. Henson attends the FOX Summer TCA All-Star Party at Soho House in West Hollywood, Calif.

Associated Press

pulled over to talk with The Associated Press about the new show and the empire that is Taraji P. Henson.

AP: Who is Cookie?

Henson: She is a hero. I mean, she is the truth. She is strong. She's family first. She's a lot of things. She doesn't compromise at all — never herself, and never her truth. That's what I love about her... She says things that I might not have the guts to say. I love the way she dresses. I love how much she cares about her sons.

AP: How is it working with Terrence Howard again, your old pal from "Hustle & Flow"?

Henson: I just know that I really like working with Ter-

rence.

I trust him. And for me as an artist — acting, you really have to be uninhibited. You cannot have any hang-ups. Or if you do, they can't breathe and live through these characters, because their hang-ups aren't your hang-ups. So for me in order to fully explore characters without throwing Taraji in the mix, I have to feel safe... And with Terrence, I'm so safe with him, I can try anything... We're friends. We've known each other, so it really works for Cookie and Lucious. When they came to me with the project, I said it has to be Terrence. When I cracked open the script, I saw no one but Terrence.

Emma Stone extends her run as Bowles in Broadway's 'Cabaret'

By MARK KENNEDY

AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) -- Emma Stone plans to stick around the Kit Kat Klub - she's extending her stay in the current Broadway revival of "Cabaret."

Roundabout Theatre Company said Monday that Stone will now star as Sally Bowles for an additional two weeks through Feb. 15. The actress who will finish the show's run through March 29 will be announced later.

Stone, known for her films including "The Amazing Spider-Man 2," "Crazy, Stupid, Love" and "Easy A," took over the role from Michelle Williams in November.

Set in 1931 Berlin, "Cabaret" centers on the world of the indulgent Kit Kat Klub as it becomes intertwined with the world outside, which gets more precarious as Nazis take over. The songs by John Kander and Fred Ebb include "Willkommen" and "Tomorrow Belongs to Me."



Emma Stone appears at the curtain call following her debut performance in Broadway's "Cabaret" on Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2014 in New York.

Associated Press

Review: Phil Hogan delivers clever psychological thriller

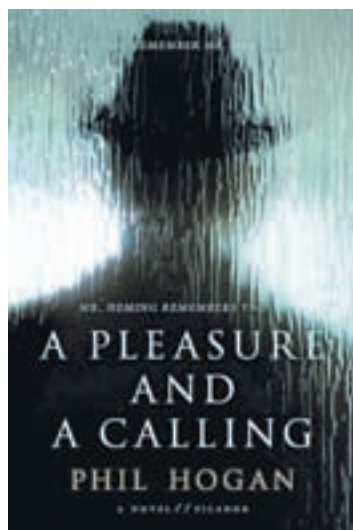
OLINE H. COGDILL
Associated Press

William Heming is the proverbial quiet man, nondescript, keeping to himself, mastering "the skill of being likable, but not memorable." Yet Heming seethes with self-righteous contempt for others and a propensity for vengeance and violence that erupts when he feels threatened, or just irritated.

His employees and clients believe the seemingly unobtrusive Heming leads a boring life, but nothing could be further from the truth in Phil Hogan's fascinating dark character study. Starting as a quiet tale about an odd man, "A Pleasure and a Calling" wastes little time expanding to a clever psychological thriller about a man full of menace.

Heming has owned a successful real estate agency in a "leafy, bustling" British town for 17 years, selling hundreds of houses. And he knows those houses intimately as he has kept the keys to each and, as a self-appointed guardian of the village, has little compunction about visiting those homes when the owners are gone. "I don't peep through windows. ... I am not a stalker, or a voyeur. I am simply sharing an experience, a life as it happens." He is oblivious to how creepy he is, helping himself to breakfast at one house, going through checkbooks and diaries at another house, rearranging items at another house.

As for those who are rude to him, or don't pick up after their dogs, or clip an automobile without leaving a



This photo provided by Picador USA shows the book cover for "A Pleasure and a Calling," (Picador) by author Phil Hogan.

Associated Press note, Heming is prepared to dismantle their lives from never-ending, unexplained deliveries to being arrested for thefts they didn't commit.

Heming's fixation on Douglas Sharp following a minor insult swells to an obsession on Abigail Rice, the young woman with whom the married Douglas is having an affair. "Simmering with desire and hatred," it's time, Heming believes, to permanently remove Douglas so that he and Abigail can be together.

Hogan avoids cliches as he delivers one surprise after another. Heming at first seems harmless, but Hogan shows bit by bit how Heming has been scheming and diabolical, making this complex character both a villain and a hero. "A Pleasure and a Calling" brims with wry wit and taut tension, and will make readers think about changing the locks on their doors, just to be cautious. □

Jewel working on revealing memoir, to be published this fall

NEW YORK (AP) -- Musician and actress Jewel is going back to the books.

She has a deal with Penguin Random House imprint Blue Rider Press for a memoir scheduled to come out in the fall. Blue Rider announced the currently untitled book Monday.

In 1998, Jewel's "A Night

Without Armor" became the rare poetry collection to sell more 1 million copies.

Blue Rider says Jewel will reveal a "far more complicated life" than previously known. She will write about her childhood and career while offering writing advice and insights on being a mother. □

Review: Book balances funny, fragile times of Bob Hope



This photo provided by Simon & Schuster shows the cover of the book, "Bob Hope: Entertainer of the Century" (Simon & Schuster), by Richard Zoglin.

Associated Press

DOUGLASS K. DANIEL
Associated Press

"Hope: Entertainer of the Century" (Simon & Schuster), by Richard Zoglin

At one time, Bob Hope was the hottest thing in comedy, a fresh face with a fresh delivery. Really. He was cutting edge in the 1930s, practically inventing the monologue as a delivery system for jokes. Hope went on to reach the top of every entertainment medium he tried — vaudeville, theater, movies, radio and television — and became omnipresent in American life.

One thing Hope couldn't do was walk away from the limelight. Long before he died in 2003, at the age of 100, he became the symbol of a bygone era of entertainment, a beloved relic for those who bothered to notice. Such is the danger of one curtain call too many and a hundred more after that.

In "Hope: Entertainer of the Century," author Richard Zoglin doesn't ignore Hope's insatiable ego and other flaws but also doesn't allow them to overwhelm his considerable talents. It's a finely balanced and detailed biography that explores, explains and ultimately celebrates an uncomplicated man who probably made more people laugh than anyone in history.

His parents named him Leslie Hope, the sixth of their sev-

en sons, all but the youngest born in England. His father was a stone mason who drank too much when he worked too little — and there was never much work. Hope's mother was the family's cornerstone, a tireless worker in and outside the home. Their hand-to-mouth existence continued after they immigrated to Cleveland when Leslie was just 4 years old.

While Hope cited a lack of interest in schooling for dropping out as a teenager, Zoglin reports that nearly two years in reform school (probably for stealing) ended Hope's formal education. The only subject he had enjoyed was music, which his mother used to brighten their dreary lives. A lively personality as well as music led young Les Hope to the stage.

Zoglin traces the foundations of Hope's persona to the decade he spent in vaudeville. First, Hope honed his skills as a comic dancer, singer and skit performer. He stood out as a wisecracking emcee at theaters, then discovered that tailoring his material to his audience generated even more laughs. (Speed up the delivery in the East, slow it down in the South.) Talking directly to the people in the seats, even gossiping about other performers and backstage antics, gave him an unusually personal connection to audiences. Along the way he picked up a new name: Les Hope became Bob, a name he thought had a ring of "Hiya, fellas" in it.

That sums up Bob Hope. No tortured soul doing battle with inner demons, just a professional yuckster seeking a winning formula for producing applause. Not that the lack of demons meant a lack of drama in his life. The least perceptive of armchair psychiatrists could connect his threadbare childhood to an unending quest for money, attention and love. The money never stopped rolling in — and with it the means to carry on liaisons with women other than his wife of eight de-

cadecades. Even in his 80s Hope was racking up millions and keeping a girl on the side.

Without question Hope gave less of himself to his family than to friends and his public. (He left a daughter's wedding reception early to take in the Super Bowl in Miami with Vice President-elect Spiro Agnew.) While overseas trips to entertain the troops fed his ego and enriched his career — those TV specials were money-makers and brand builders — there is no doubt that Hope gave America's men and women in uniform a much-needed boost. At least twice he came close to potentially fatal plane crashes, but that didn't stop him from putting on shows for the troops until age caught up with him.

Zoglin enlivens his book with scores of jokes from Hope's routines (he said of President Harry Truman, a former haberdasher, "Never trust a politician who knows how to measure your inseam") and isn't afraid to point out that his routines could be tired and obvious. Zoglin also offers fascinating tidbits about the business of being Bob Hope. For example, his fee for personal appearances was up to \$75,000 in the mid-1980s. At the same time he was making \$1 million a year for a few days' work as pitchman for a phone directory. The author rewards the cooperation of Hope family members and intimates by showing how central he was to American culture in the 20th century, a fact all too easy to forget. In turn, Zoglin gives his readers a story told with insight and honesty, even when instances of the comedian's pettiness and selfishness cast a shadow on his overall generosity and good nature.

Entertainer of the century? It's hard not to come to that conclusion. That Zoglin must make the case tells us a lot about the generational nature of entertainment. Few comedians have been as welcome for as long by as many. But then everything gets stale at some point — even Bob Hope. □



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